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## ABSTRACT

This report is a summary of the results of annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools of the United States for the years 1969 through 1983. A full report of the 1984 poll is included. The items have been arranged topically so that the user can identify and follow trends more readily. Some questions have been asked repeatedly over the years. Only one question, "What are the problems of your local schools?", has been asked in every poll. The year in which a question was asked is listed after the question, and related questions are grouped together. The topics covered in the survey include public awareness; perceived importance of educations; goals; school quality and improvement; innovations; finances; government and schools; private and parochial schools; curriculum and materials; computers; homework; extracurricular activities; testing; attendance; uninterested, handicapped, or special students; student self-evaluation; discipline; drugs, alcohol, and smoking; crime; student rights; racial issues; parents, teachers, administrators, and school boards; colleges; youth unemployment; adult education; preschool; and the National Commission on Excellence in Education. (DWH)

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THE PHI DELTA KAPPA  
**GALLUP  
POLLS**  
OF  
**ATTITUDES  
TOWARD  
EDUCATION  
1969-1984**  
A TOPICAL SUMMARY

STANLEY M. ELAM, EDITOR

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## Acknowledgments

Dr. George Gallup and his staff prepared the document, *Topical Report: Annual Surveys of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 1969-1983*, on which this volume is based. This categorization of the nearly 400 questions asked of the general public in the United States over that 15-year period, and the summaries of answers, were generously forwarded to us by Alec Gallup in the spring of 1984. The questions include those reported in the annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools published in the *Phi Delta Kappan* plus a few others asked in other polls conducted by the Gallup Organization.

Phi Delta Kappa owes a great debt of gratitude to the late Dr. George Gallup and his staff for compiling this data and releasing it for publication. I also would like to recognize the scrupulous work of David Ruetschlin, staff associate in the Phi Delta Kappa Division of Special Publications, for checking all of the figures in this compilation against the original reports.

## Introduction

This volume summarizes findings of the annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools of the U.S. for a 15-year period, 1969 through 1983. In the final pages it also reports in full the 1984 poll, as published in the September 1984 issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan*.

This summary reveals certain striking trends in public opinion about the public schools. Most ominous for the well-being of America, perhaps, are trends reflected in the answers to just two questions: 1) How do you rate your local schools (on an A, B, C, D, F scale)? and 2) Would you like to see a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?

Between 1974, when the question was first asked, and 1983, the percentage of people rating their local schools A or B (i.e., excellent or good) dropped from 48% to 31%. There was a corresponding increase in the lower ratings: from 11% rating their local schools D or F in 1974 to 20% in 1983. Even allowing for some sampling error, these figures represent a negative change of opinion by 25 to 30 million people (there are about 170 million voting-age adults in the U.S.). It is a significant change indeed.

In response to the second question, in 1969 about 75% of parents interviewed said that they would like to see one of their children teach in a public school. In 1983 only 45% said that they would like one of their children to be a public school teacher.

Do such answers mean that U.S. schools are less effective now than they were a decade ago? That teaching is less attractive as a career than it was in 1969? The answer to the first question is, "Not necessarily." The answer to the second is, "Probably yes." A rational judgment on the first has to be based on dozens of facts and factors not directly related to public opinion. Explaining and analyzing these factors is beyond the scope of this volume. But I would feel remiss if I did not mention some of the more obvious factors. So let us take a closer look at the drop in school approval rates. Gallup has noted that parents with children in school always rate their local schools higher than do people who have no children in school. He believed that this difference reflects at least two interlocking facts: 1) Parents know a good deal more about the schools and can make more accurate assessments than nonparents. They are heavily influenced by firsthand knowledge, whereas the opinions of nonparents derive more often from the media, which tend to report only negative or sensational events. 2) There are far fewer respondents with children in school today than there were in 1974. In that year 39% of Gallup's respondents had children in public schools and 55% did not. In 1983 the first figure had dropped to 27% while the second rose to 68%. (In 1974, 8% of the respondents had children in nonpublic schools; in 1983, 6% did.) These factors alone could account for the 10-year downtrend in ratings, and they are unrelated to school quality.\*

As for the 30% drop in the number of parents who would like to see their children take up teaching, probing by Gallup interviewers revealed that the prime factor was the surplus of teachers in the Seventies and early Eighties. Parents didn't want their children to prepare for nonexistent jobs. Other significant factors included the well-publicized economic disadvantages of teaching, the growing prevalence of teacher burnout, and increasingly attractive opportunities for women in other fields. (There was a time, of course, when teaching — which is still predominantly "women's work" at the elementary level — represented one of the few respectable career opportunities open to young women.) In 1969, the year that Gallup education polls were initiated, nearly one-quarter of all students enrolled in U.S. colleges planned to

\*Psychological imponderables are at work here, too. How does the proprietary interest of parents in their local schools affect ratings? Does resistance to being taxed to educate other people's children affect ratings by nonparents and, if so, how?

become teachers. By 1980 that fraction had dropped to one-twelfth. No wonder teacher shortages began to reappear very recently.

Clearly, raw data from the poll cannot be properly assessed without drawing on related information. Readers of this book should remember that. Also, it is important to view the figures in this volume in historical context. Note that the period since 1969 has been especially difficult for many people connected with education. It was a time of broken dreams. For example, the promise of federal intervention to solve some of education's most intractable problems was never fully realized. Lyndon Johnson, who had hoped to be a great "education president," was dragged down by Vietnam. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, perhaps his greatest education legacy, did not presage the massive infusion of federal funds that would be required to achieve educational equality among the states; and this is one of America's continuing scandals. Other federal initiatives of noble intent failed or were crippled for a variety of reasons — conceptual inadequacy, underfunding, bureaucratic inertia, etc.

The collective bargaining movement in education that swept the country in the early and mid-Sixties was only marginally successful in producing economic benefits, better working conditions, and enhanced status for teachers. So long as there was a teacher shortage, bargaining at the district level did help, particularly in the large cities. But when the post-World War II baby boom had receded, there were surplus teachers and surplus classrooms. During the 14 years between 1970 and 1984, the number of school-age children dropped by 6.2 million — enough to fill 12,400 elementary schools at 500 pupils each. (New York State alone lost 700,000 children in that age group.) Not for another 10 years will we gain back perhaps 75% of the school population lost in the last 14 years.

The population factor combined negatively with "stagflation" — sluggish growth in the GNP, monetary inflation, and unemployment. Together, these factors meant that teachers actually lost purchasing power in the Seventies.

And then there was Watergate. Social scientists have noted that a pervasive loss of faith in most of our social institutions accompanied the Watergate revelations of mendacity in government. Education did not escape, although loss of public confidence in the schools was less marked than loss of faith in several other public institutions. George Gallup said, in reporting the 1974 poll, "The public schools represent one of the two or three American institutions which have held the respect and confidence of a majority of citizens in a period of widespread cynicism and disillusionment."

As the above discussion suggests, it is easy for the public to misjudge the schools. It is just as easy for educators to misread the meaning of opinion polls. The best antidote in both cases is a fund of related information. That information must be supplied and disseminated, insofar as possible, by leaders of the profession. In the words of one of the poll's originators, Edward Brainard, the function and purpose of the public education poll is "to obtain information for public school educators — information that will help them better serve their students and their communities." The "information" Brainard refers to consists largely of images in the minds of people. If these images are distorted and inaccurate — and obviously they often are — it only means that the education profession faces another daunting task: education of the adult public about the schools. As I noted in a *Phi Delta Kappan* critique of the first 15 years of the poll, "Every poll has made clear the need for a constant flow of information to the public from the schools, using every available medium. This flow is particularly necessary today."\* The other side of the coin is that there needs to be a generous flow of information in the other direction as well.

This information flow grew notably in the 1983-84 academic year (after publication of the fifteenth education poll). Over the past year, for example, the findings of a number of national studies of education have been reported and debated in the media. For the first time since the late Fifties, the problems of education have become a major national issue. Reforms of many kinds have been considered. As a result, most of the 50 state legislatures have taken action to improve schools, and they should continue to do so through the Eighties.

I doubt if anyone would contend that schools suddenly became dramatically better in 1983-84. Yet the 1984 Gallup poll reveals a dramatic 35% increase in public approval of local public schools in that one year. The percentage of people giving their schools an A or a B (excellent or good) rose from 31% in 1983 to 42% in 1984, the highest approval rating since 1976. George Gallup, who wrote the analysis of 1984 poll findings only a week before his death, speculated that one important reason for this increase in approval was the fact that, as a result of the national debate and its local application, people knew more than ever about their schools and came to recognize their strengths. People also knew that improvements were being made or

\*See "The Gallup Education Survey: Impressions of a Poll Watcher," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1983, pp. 26-32.

were under consideration. Gallup's speculation is supported by the fact that the "don't know" category of respondents to the ratings question fell from 17% in 1983 to only 8% in 1984.

Most Americans are deeply committed to the belief that education is the most important service rendered by government. They continue to feel, according to the poll, that public education contributes more to national strength than either industrial might or military power. They consider education the key to personal success. Thus the heavy critical attention being paid to education today may be a blessing in disguise. Education leaders, as represented by the membership of Phi Delta Kappa, can use the basic positive feelings of the American public about the importance of education as an anchor for reform that will produce better education for all.

\* \* \*

The items in this summary have been arranged topically so that the user can identify and follow trends more readily. Certain questions have been asked repeatedly, although only one (What are the problems of your local schools?) has been asked in every poll. The year in which a question was asked is listed after the question, and related questions are grouped together. Also, throughout this compilation "DK" has been used to indicate "don't know," "no opinion," or "no answer," because the three categories appear to have been used rather indiscriminately in the original reports.

The complete Gallup Polls of Public Attitudes Toward Education are available from Phi Delta Kappa. The first 10 polls are included in the volume, *A Decade of Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1978* (price: \$5.50, PDK members \$4.50). Reprints of each of the polls published in the *Phi Delta Kappan* from 1979 on are also available (price: \$7.50 for minimum order of 25). Order from Phi Delta Kappa, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402. Demographic breakdowns for the items in this summary are available from the Gallup Organization.

The Gallup/PDK polls will continue to provide some of the information about public opinion that educators need. The Phi Delta Kappa Board of Directors remains committed to financial support of the polls, and membership response to their publication has been very gratifying to those of us who have been involved in designing the questions and analyzing the results.

Stanley Elam  
Gallup/PDK Poll Coordinator  
1 August 1984

# Public Awareness of Local Schools

## Level of Awareness

How much do you know about the local schools — quite a lot, some, or very little? (1969, 1983)

|             | 1969<br>% | 1983<br>% |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Quite a lot | 18        | 22        |
| Some        | 40        | 42        |
| Very little | 42        | 29        |
| Nothing     | -         | 7         |

Would you like to know *more* about the public schools in this community?

|     | 1969<br>% | 1970<br>% | 1974<br>% |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 65        | 54        | 54        |
| No  | 35        | 44        | 38        |

## Names of Local Officials

Do you happen to know the name of the principal of the high school attended by the children in your neighborhood? ... the president of the local school board? ... the principal of the elementary school? ... the superintendent of schools? (1969)

|                                | Yes<br>% |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Principal of high school       | 40       |
| Principal of elementary school | 47       |
| President of school board      | 26       |
| Superintendent                 | 56       |

## Facts About Local Situation

Do you think there is a shortage of classroom space in this community? (1969)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 56 |
| No  | 29 |
| DK  | 15 |

What is your guess as to the cost per child per year in the public schools of your community? (1969)

|                      | %  |
|----------------------|----|
| Gave a dollar figure | 43 |
| DK                   | 57 |

Are there many high school dropouts in this community? (1969)

|             | %  |
|-------------|----|
| Quite a few | 26 |
| Almost none | 41 |
| Other       | 3  |
| DK          | 30 |

What percentage of the high school graduates from your high school go on to college, do you think? (1969)

|                           | %  |
|---------------------------|----|
| Gave an actual percentage | 67 |
| DK                        | 33 |

## Sources of Information

What are the sources of information you use to judge the quality of schools in your community — that is, where do you get your information about the schools? (1973, 1983)

|                         | Sources of Information |      |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------|
|                         | 1973                   | 1983 |
|                         | %                      | %    |
| Newspapers              | 38                     | 42   |
| Students                | 43                     | 36   |
| Parents of students     | 33                     | 29   |
| Other adults            | 23                     | 27   |
| School board/faculty    | 33                     | 24   |
| Radio and/or television | 20                     | 19   |
| Personal experience     | -                      | 8    |
| PTA                     | 3                      | -    |
| Other                   | 12                     | 4    |
| Undesignated            | 4                      | 7    |

What is your *best* source of information about the local public schools? (1969, 1979)

|                                    | 1969 | 1979 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|
|                                    | %    | %    |
| Local newspapers                   | 38   | 37   |
| Radio and TV                       | 16   | 21   |
| School publications/newsletters    | 8    | 7    |
| Word of mouth/personal involvement | 40   | 70   |
| DK                                 | 6    | 8    |

## Exposure to Education News in Local Media

During the last month, have you read any articles in the newspapers about local schools ... heard anything on radio ... seen anything on TV? (1969)

|                        | Yes |
|------------------------|-----|
|                        | %   |
| Read newspaper article | 60  |
| Heard on radio         | 36  |
| Saw on TV              | 35  |

During the last year, have you received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the local schools are doing ... read any book that deals with education? (1969)

|                           | Yes |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| Received written material | 35  |
| Read book                 | 16  |

What is the name of the book(s)? (1969) (Asked of those who said they had read a book.)

|                  | %  |
|------------------|----|
| 1 title given    | 4  |
| 2 titles given   | 2  |
| 3 titles given   | -  |
| 4-6 titles given | 1  |
| No titles given  | 10 |
|                  | 17 |

\*less than 1%

Since September, which of the following, if any, have you yourself done? (1983)

|                                                                                                               | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the local public schools are doing      | 32                      | 22                            | 58                               | 38                                  |
| Attended a local public school athletic event                                                                 | 25                      | 18                            | 42                               | 28                                  |
| Attended a school play or concert in any local public school                                                  | 24                      | 16                            | 42                               | 36                                  |
| Met with any teachers or administrators in the local public school about your own child                       | 21                      | 4                             | 62                               | 44                                  |
| Attended a PTA meeting                                                                                        | 14                      | 4                             | 36                               | 46                                  |
| Attended any meeting dealing with the local public school situation                                           | 10                      | 7                             | 18                               | 13                                  |
| Attended a school board meeting                                                                               | 8                       | 4                             | 16                               | 24                                  |
| Written any letter to the school board, newspaper, or any other organization about the local school situation | 4                       | 3                             | 6                                | 5                                   |
| None of the above                                                                                             | 45                      | 56                            | 14                               | 22                                  |
| DK                                                                                                            | 4                       | 4                             | 2                                | 6                                   |

## Local Media Treatment

Do you think the news media (newspapers, TV, and radio) give a fair and accurate picture of the public schools in this community, or not? (1977)

|           | %  |
|-----------|----|
| Yes, fair | 42 |
| No        | 36 |
| DK        | 22 |

In your opinion, how could the media (newspapers, TV, and radio) improve their reporting of education in the local schools? (1977)

The answers elicited by this question often referred to the paucity of news about the schools reported in many communities. But the most frequent response dwelt on the need for more positive news — interesting things the schools are doing to achieve their educational goals.

Many specific suggestions were offered which the media might well consider. Among these were:

"Reporters should be sent into the schoolrooms to see what goes on there. They should put themselves in the teacher's place, and in the student's place."

"It would be interesting to find out about all the different courses that are offered."

"Reporters should talk to students, explore their problems."

"Why don't they [the media] tell us about the standing of the local schools — how well they do in comparison with the private schools, and with other schools in nearby cities."

"I should like to know more about the changes that are being introduced and why. There should be more background information about education and about new programs."

"Outstanding students should be written up and praised the way top athletes are."

"An interesting series could be built around the idea of a typical day at school with a typical seventh-grader, ninth-grader, etc. I can remember what went on in my day. I wonder if it is the same now."

"I hear a lot about the gadgets now used in the schools and in the classrooms to teach different subjects such as foreign language and I would like to know more about them."

"The media report on the school budget, but they never tell, in detail, just where the tax dollars are spent."

"In the magazines I read about 'open' classrooms, 'team teaching,' and such things, and I wonder if our local schools go in for these new ideas."

## Perceived Importance of Education/Schools

### Relative to Military, Industry

In determining America's strength in the future — say, 25 years from now — how important do you feel each of the following factors will be — very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important? (1982)

|                                                                            | Very<br>important<br>% | Fairly<br>important<br>% | Not too<br>important<br>% | Not at all<br>important<br>% | DK<br>% |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Developing the best educational system in the world                     | 84                     | 13                       | 1                         | *                            | 2       |
| 2. Developing the most efficient industrial production system in the world | 66                     | 26                       | 3                         | 1                            | 4       |
| 3. Building the strongest military force in the world                      | 47                     | 37                       | 11                        | 2                            | 3       |

\*Less than one-half of 1%.

### Degree Expressed

How important are schools to one's future success — extremely important, fairly important, not too important? (1973, 1980, 1982)

|                     | 1973<br>% | 1980<br>% | 1982<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Extremely important | 76        | 82        | 80        |
| Fairly important    | 19        | 15        | 18        |
| Not too important   | 4         | 2         | 1         |
| DK                  | 1         | 1         | 1         |

## Desired Federal Spending Priorities

If and when more federal money from Washington is available, which one of the areas on this card do you think should be given first consideration when these funds are distributed? And which one of these areas do you think should be given second consideration? And which one of these areas do you think should be given third consideration? (1975, 1982)

| 1975 Results            | First<br>Choice<br>% | Second<br>Choice<br>% | Third<br>Choice<br>% | Combined<br>Choices<br>% |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Health care             | 18                   | 19                    | 16                   | 53                       |
| Public school education | 16                   | 15                    | 17                   | 48                       |
| Law enforcement         | 11                   | 14                    | 16                   | 41                       |
| Welfare and aid to poor | 14                   | 11                    | 7                    | 32                       |
| Public housing          | 10                   | 9                     | 7                    | 26                       |
| Pollution/conservation  | 8                    | 8                     | 8                    | 24                       |
| Mass transit            | 6                    | 7                     | 6                    | 19                       |
| Military defense        | 6                    | 5                     | 5                    | 16                       |
| Agricultural aid        | 4                    | 4                     | 7                    | 15                       |
| Highway improvement     | 4                    | 4                     | 5                    | 13                       |
| Foreign aid             | 1                    | 1                     | 1                    | 3                        |
| DK                      | 2                    | 3                     | 5                    | 10                       |

| 1982 Results            | First<br>Choice<br>% | Second<br>Choice<br>% | Third<br>Choice<br>% | Combined<br>Choices<br>% |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Public school education | 21                   | 17                    | 17                   | 55                       |
| Health care             | 19                   | 19                    | 15                   | 53                       |
| Welfare and aid to poor | 16                   | 15                    | 11                   | 42                       |
| Military defense        | 14                   | 9                     | 10                   | 33                       |
| Law enforcement         | 8                    | 11                    | 13                   | 32                       |
| Public housing          | 8                    | 9                     | 10                   | 27                       |
| Pollution/conservation  | 5                    | 7                     | 6                    | 18                       |
| Agricultural aid        | 3                    | 4                     | 6                    | 13                       |
| Mass transit            | 2                    | 3                     | 4                    | 9                        |
| Highway improvement     | 1                    | 3                     | 3                    | 7                        |
| Foreign aid             | 1                    | 1                     | 1                    | 3                        |
| DK                      | 2                    | 2                     | 4                    | 8                        |

## Goals of Education and the Role of the Public Schools

People have different reasons why they want their children to get an education. What are the chief reasons that come to mind? (1972)

|                                                          | %  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| To get better jobs                                       | 44 |
| To get along better with people at all levels of society | 43 |
| To make more money — achieve financial success           | 38 |
| To attain self-satisfaction                              | 21 |
| To stimulate their minds                                 | 15 |
| Miscellaneous reasons                                    | 11 |

I am going to read off some of the areas to which the public high schools devote attention in educating students. As I read off these areas, one at a time, would you tell me whether you feel the high schools in your community devote too much attention, not enough attention, or about the right amount of attention to that area? (1981)

|                                                                                  | Too Much % | Not Enough % | Right Amount % | DK % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|------|
| Developing students' moral and ethical character                                 | 2          | 62           | 21             | 15   |
| Teaching students how to think                                                   | 2          | 59           | 25             | 14   |
| Preparing students who do not go to college for a job or career after graduation | 2          | 56           | 29             | 13   |
| Preparing students to become informed citizens prepared to vote at 18            | 2          | 55           | 28             | 15   |
| Preparing students for college                                                   | 3          | 43           | 39             | 15   |
| Developing students' appreciation of art, music, and other cultural interests    | 7          | 37           | 41             | 15   |

Of course all of the qualities listed on this card are important in the overall development of a child. But which *one* do you regard as the *most* important? (1976)

|                                      | %  |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Learning to think for oneself        | 26 |
| Ability to get along with others     | 23 |
| Willingness to accept responsibility | 21 |
| High moral standards                 | 13 |
| Eagerness to learn                   | 11 |
| Desire to excel                      | 4  |
| DK                                   | 2  |

### Asked of High School Juniors and Seniors

What are the overall educational goals of the school you attend? (1974)

|                                                 | %  |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| To prepare students for college                 | 43 |
| To prepare students for jobs                    | 25 |
| To graduate students and get them out of school | 10 |

What do you feel are the most important things you are getting out of school? (1974)

The most frequent answers were "making friends" and "learning to get along with people." These reasons were cited even more often than "gaining a general education" or "preparing for a job after high school." Fourth in frequency of mentions was "preparation for college."

Very few students mentioned goals usually cited by educators: "personal development," "acquiring a sense of values," "widening one's outlook," "becoming more mature." Some students said they had developed a greater sense of responsibility, more self-reliance, and that they had learned to cope better with people and problems; but very few juniors and seniors said that the most important thing they were getting out of school was the development of their individual capabilities.

## The Public's Appraisal of Public Schools

### Confidence in Institutions

How much confidence do you, yourself, have in these American institutions to serve the public's needs — a great deal of confidence, a fair amount, or very little? (1980)

|                     | <b>Great Deal</b> | <b>Fair Amount</b> | <b>Very Little</b> | <b>None (Volunteered)</b> | <b>DK</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
|                     | <b>%</b>          | <b>%</b>           | <b>%</b>           | <b>%</b>                  | <b>%</b>  |
| The church          | 42                | 40                 | 15                 | 2                         | 1         |
| The public schools  | 28                | 46                 | 20                 | 3                         | 3         |
| The courts          | 19                | 45                 | 28                 | 5                         | 3         |
| Local government    | 19                | 51                 | 23                 | 4                         | 3         |
| State government    | 17                | 52                 | 24                 | 4                         | 3         |
| National government | 14                | 47                 | 31                 | 5                         | 3         |
| Labor unions        | 17                | 38                 | 30                 | 9                         | 6         |
| Big business        | 13                | 42                 | 36                 | 5                         | 4         |

## What Children Like About Their Schools

What is the main thing that *your eldest child* likes about the school he/she attends? (1982)

|                           | Public School<br>Parents | Nonpublic School<br>Parents |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                           | %                        | %                           |
| Teachers                  | 17                       | 18                          |
| Friends                   | 16                       | 14                          |
| Sports                    | 13                       | 11                          |
| Enjoys learning           | 13                       | 21                          |
| Social program            | 11                       | 3                           |
| Using the library         | 7                        | 6                           |
| Curriculum                | 6                        | 4                           |
| Math                      | 6                        | 1                           |
| Art                       | 4                        | 5                           |
| Band/choir                | 4                        | —                           |
| Science class             | 4                        | 4                           |
| Feeling of accomplishment | 4                        | 6                           |
| Industrial arts           | 2                        | —                           |
| Miscellaneous             | 9                        | 12                          |
| DK                        | 9                        | 14                          |
| Doesn't like school       | 5                        | 6                           |

## What Parents Like About Schools Their Children Attend

And what is the main thing that *you* like about it [the school he/she attends]? (1982)

|                            | Public School<br>Parents | Nonpublic School<br>Parents |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            | %                        | %                           |
| Quality of education       | 13                       | 25                          |
| Teachers' interest         | 11                       | 14                          |
| Curriculum                 | 11                       | 8                           |
| Children are learning      | 10                       | 11                          |
| Qualified teachers         | 10                       | 5                           |
| Faculty are nice           | 7                        | 3                           |
| Location                   | 7                        | 5                           |
| Parents kept informed      | 4                        | 7                           |
| Discipline                 | 4                        | 20                          |
| Teacher/child relationship | 3                        | 6                           |
| Students are motivated     | 3                        | 4                           |
| Morals/values taught       | 1                        | 10                          |
| Extracurricular activities | 3                        | 2                           |
| Emphasis on the basics     | 1                        | 1                           |
| Classroom size             | 1                        | 2                           |
| Miscellaneous              | 3                        | 4                           |
| DK                         | 10                       | 8                           |

## Letter Grades Given (Overall)

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools, themselves, in this community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give: the public schools *here* ... the public schools *nationally*. (1974-83) (National ratings were begun in 1981)

|      | 1974  | 1975  | 1976  | 1977  | 1978  | 1979  | 1980  | 1981  |          | 1982  |          | 1983  |          |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
|      | Local | Local | Local | Local | Local | Local | Local | Local | National | Local | National | Local | National |
|      | %     | %     | %     | %     | %     | %     | %     | %     | %        | %     | %        | %     | %        |
| A    | 18    | 13    | 13    | 11    | 9     | 8     | 10    | 9     | 2        | 8     | 2        | 6     | 2        |
| B    | 30    | 30    | 29    | 26    | 27    | 26    | 25    | 27    | 18       | 29    | 20       | 25    | 17       |
| C    | 21    | 28    | 28    | 28    | 30    | 30    | 29    | 34    | 43       | 33    | 44       | 32    | 38       |
| D    | 6     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 11    | 11    | 12    | 13    | 15       | 14    | 15       | 13    | 16       |
| FAIL | 5     | 7     | 6     | 5     | 8     | 7     | 6     | 7     | 6        | 5     | 4        | 7     | 6        |
| DK   | 20    | 13    | 14    | 19    | 15    | 18    | 18    | 10    | 16       | 11    | 15       | 17    | 21       |

## Grades Given Public Schools in Specific Areas

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools, themselves, in this community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give: the *elementary schools* here/the *high schools* here ... the high schools for preparing students to get a *job/for college* ... the *teachers/principals* and *administrators/parents*. (1981)

|      | Local      |             | Prepare for |         | Principals &   | Teachers | Parents |
|------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|----------------|----------|---------|
|      | Elementary | High School | Job         | College | Administrators |          |         |
|      | %          | %           | %           | %       | %              | %        | %       |
| A    | 13         | 7           | 6           | 9       | 10             | 11       | 5       |
| B    | 33         | 25          | 20          | 25      | 26             | 28       | 24      |
| C    | 27         | 31          | 29          | 29      | 28             | 31       | 36      |
| D    | 7          | 15          | 18          | 13      | 12             | 9        | 16      |
| FAIL | 5          | 9           | 12          | 9       | 9              | 6        | 11      |
| DK   | 15         | 13          | 15          | 15      | 15             | 15       | 8       |

Using the A, B, D, C, and FAIL scale again, please grade the job you feel the public schools here are doing in providing education in each of the following areas. (1981) (Asked of parents only)

|                            | A  | B  | C  | D  | FAIL | DK |
|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----|
|                            | %  | %  | %  | %  | %    | %  |
| Reading                    | 16 | 32 | 27 | 11 | 5    | 9  |
| Writing                    | 12 | 34 | 27 | 12 | 6    | 9  |
| Mathematics                | 13 | 34 | 29 | 10 | 4    | 10 |
| Science                    | 11 | 33 | 33 | 7  | 3    | 13 |
| Social studies             | 11 | 32 | 32 | 8  | 3    | 14 |
| Music                      | 17 | 32 | 22 | 9  | 3    | 17 |
| Physical education         | 21 | 41 | 20 | 4  | 2    | 12 |
| Art                        | 12 | 30 | 28 | 9  | 2    | 19 |
| Vocational or job training | 8  | 27 | 25 | 15 | 6    | 19 |

Using the A, B, C, D, and FAIL scale again, please grade the public schools in this community for each of the following. (1983)

|                                                                    | A  | B  | C  | D  | FAIL | DK |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----|
|                                                                    | %  | %  | %  | %  | %    | %  |
| The physical plants and facilities                                 | 30 | 35 | 21 | 5  | 2    | 7  |
| The curriculum, that is, the subjects offered                      | 24 | 37 | 25 | 4  | 3    | 7  |
| The handling of extracurricular activities — sports, theater, etc. | 20 | 33 | 26 | 8  | 4    | 9  |
| Books and instructional materials                                  | 19 | 33 | 32 | 6  | 2    | 8  |
| Quality of teaching                                                | 13 | 35 | 29 | 12 | 4    | 7  |
| Education students get                                             | 14 | 32 | 29 | 15 | 4    | 6  |
| The way schools are administered                                   | 11 | 28 | 29 | 17 | 3    | 7  |
| Preparing students for college                                     | 12 | 26 | 27 | 17 | 4    | 14 |
| The way discipline is handled                                      | 11 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 19   | 7  |
| Preparing for jobs those students not planning to go to college    | 7  | 19 | 29 | 20 | 9    | 16 |
| Behavior of students                                               | 5  | 19 | 27 | 19 | 22   | 8  |

## Satisfaction with Present School

Would you like to send your child to a different public school? (1979)

|                                                     | Yes<br>% | No<br>% | DK<br>% |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Parents whose eldest child is<br>12 years and under | 12       | 78      | 10      |
| Parents whose eldest child is<br>13 years and over  | 11       | 86      | 3       |

If you could send a child of yours to *any* school in this area, to what school would you send him? (1974)

|                            | %  |
|----------------------------|----|
| Replied                    | 68 |
| No reply                   | 18 |
| No other school<br>in area | 14 |

## Attitudes Becoming More/Less Favorable

In recent years has your overall attitude toward the public schools in your community become more favorable or less favorable? (1973)

|                | %  |
|----------------|----|
| More favorable | 32 |
| Less favorable | 36 |
| No change      | 23 |
| DK             | 9  |

As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did? (1973, 1979)

|                     | 1973<br>% | 1979<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| School better today | 61        | 41        |
| Worse               | 20        | 42        |
| No difference       | 11        | 9         |
| DK                  | 8         | 8         |

# Most Important Problems Facing Public Schools

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal? (1969-1983)

| Problems Cited                                                     | Percentages Citing Each Problem |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
|                                                                    | 1969                            | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 |  |
| Lack of discipline                                                 | 26                              | 18   | 14   | 23   | 22   | 23   | 23   | 22   | 26   | 25   | 24   | 26   | 23   | 27   | 25   |  |
| Use of drugs                                                       | —                               | 11   | 12   | 4    | 10   | 13   | 9    | 11   | 7    | 13   | 13   | 14   | 15   | 20   | 18   |  |
| Poor curriculum/poor standards/<br>concern about standards/quality | 4                               | 6    | 3    | 5    | 7    | 3    | 5    | 14   | 10   | 12   | 11   | 11   | 14   | 11   | 14   |  |
| Lack of proper financial support                                   | 14                              | 17   | 23   | 19   | 16   | 13   | 14   | 14   | 12   | 13   | 12   | 10   | 12   | 22   | 13   |  |
| Integration/busing (combined)                                      | 13                              | 17   | 21   | 18   | 18   | 16   | 15   | 15   | 13   | 13   | 9    | 10   | 11   | 6    | 5    |  |
| Overcrowding/large schools                                         | —                               | —    | —    | 10   | 9    | 6    | 10   | 5    | 5    | 5    | 4    | 7    | 5    | 4    | 3    |  |
| Difficulty in getting good teachers                                | 17                              | 12   | —    | —    | 13   | 11   | 11   | 11   | 11   | 9    | 10   | 6    | 11   | 10   | 8    |  |
| Parents' lack of interest                                          | 7                               | 3    | 4    | 6    | 4    | 6    | 2    | 5    | 5    | 4    | 3    | 6    | 5    | 5    | 6    |  |
| Teachers' lack of interest                                         | —                               | —    | 5    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 5    | 3    | 3    | 6    | 4    | 7    | 8    |  |
| Pupils' lack of interest/truancy                                   | 3                               | —    | 2    | —    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 4    | 4    | 5    | 4    | 5    | 5    |  |
| Crime/vandalism                                                    | —                               | —    | 2    | —    | —    | —    | 4    | 2    | 2    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 1    |  |
| Mismanagement of<br>funds/programs                                 | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 4    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 2    |  |
| Drinking/alcoholism                                                | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 3    |  |
| Problems with administration                                       | —                               | 1    | 3    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 1    |  |
| Lack of proper facilities                                          | 22                              | 11   | 13   | 5    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1    |  |
| Communication problems                                             | —                               | —    | —    | —    | 1    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    |  |
| School board policies                                              | —                               | 2    | 1    | —    | 4    | 4    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | —    |  |
| Government interference                                            | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |  |
| Teachers' strikes                                                  | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |  |
| Parents' involvement in school<br>activities                       | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | —    | 1    |  |
| Too many schools/declining enroll-<br>ment                         | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | —    |  |
| Transportation                                                     | 5                               | 2    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | —    | 1    | —    |  |
| Non-English-speaking students                                      | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |  |
| There are no problems                                              | 4                               | 5    | 4    | 2    | 4    | 3    | 5    | 3    | 4    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 1    | 1    |  |
| Miscellaneous                                                      | 8                               | 3    | 6    | 9    | 4    | 4    | 12   | 8    | 5    | 6    | 5    | 2    | 5    | 2    | 2    |  |
| Lack of respect for teachers/other<br>students                     | —                               | —    | 2    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 4    | 2    | 3    |  |
| Lack of needed teachers                                            | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 2    | 1    |  |
| Moral standards                                                    | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 2    | 4    |  |
| Fighting                                                           | —                               | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | —    | 1    | 1    |  |
| DK                                                                 | 13                              | 18   | 12   | 12   | 13   | 17   | 10   | 12   | 16   | 12   | 16   | 17   | 12   | 11   | 16   |  |

# Ways to Improve Public School Education

## Ways to Improve (unaided)

In your opinion, what are the main things a school has to do before it can earn an 'A'? (1979)

|                                                | %  |
|------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Improve the quality of teachers             | 23 |
| 2. Increase discipline                         | 20 |
| 3. Set higher standards                        | 17 |
| 4. Give students more individual attention     | 16 |
| 5. Put more emphasis on the basics — the 3 R's | 12 |
| 6. Better management and direction of schools  | 7  |
| 7. Establish closer relations with parents     | 6  |

What, if anything, do you think the public schools in this community should be doing that they are not doing now? (1978)

### In order of times mentioned

1. More strict discipline
2. Better teachers
3. Back to basics
4. More parental involvement
5. Higher scholastic standards
6. More education about health hazards
7. More emphasis on careers

## Ways to Improve (aided)

Which of these ways do you think would do most to *improve* the quality of public school education overall? (1976)

|                                                                             | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Devote more attention to teaching of basic skills                           | 51 |
| Enforce stricter discipline                                                 | 50 |
| Meet individual needs of students                                           | 42 |
| Improve parent/school relations                                             | 41 |
| Emphasize moral development                                                 | 39 |
| Emphasize career education and development of salable skills                | 38 |
| Provide opportunities for teachers to keep up to date regarding new methods | 29 |
| Raise academic standards                                                    | 27 |
| Raise teachers' salaries                                                    | 14 |
| Increase amount of homework                                                 | 14 |
| Build new buildings                                                         | 9  |
| Lower age for compulsory attendance                                         | 5  |
| None                                                                        | 1  |
| DK                                                                          | 4  |

What suggestions would you make to get parents, the community, and the school to work together to improve education in the local public schools? (1979)

Survey respondents had many suggestions, which can be summarized as follows:

1. *Better communication.* The local community cannot be expected to take a keen interest in the schools; if people know little about them. The media should carry much more school news, especially news about the achievements of students and the schools, the means being taken to deal with school problems, and new developments in education. Media research has shown that there is far greater interest in schools and in education than most journalists think. At the same time, the schools should not rely solely on the major media. Newsletters are important to convey information that the media cannot be expected to report.

2. *More conferences.* Many of those included in the survey recommend that more conferences about the progress and problems of students be held with parents — both father and mother. Special monthly parent meetings and workshops are also suggested as a way to bring teachers, administrators, and parents together. Survey respondents also recommend courses for parents and special lectures. PTA meetings, some suggest, could be more useful to parents if school problems and educational developments were given more attention.

Here are a number of things which may have a good effect on the education students receive in the public schools of this community. Will you choose four (from a list of 14 suggestions) which you think are particularly important. (1980)

3. *Invite volunteers.* Some respondents suggest that, if more members of the community could serve in a volunteer capacity in the classrooms and elsewhere in the school, they would further better community understanding of the problems faced by the schools. In addition, their involvement in school operations would increase their own interest in educational improvement at the local level.

4. *Plan special occasions.* Interest in the schools and in education could be improved, some suggest, by inviting members of the community — both those who have children in the schools and those who do not — to attend meetings, lectures, and social events in the school buildings. As noted in another section of this survey report, only one person in three across the nation attended a lecture, meeting, or social occasion in a school building during the last year. In 1969, when the same question was asked, a slightly higher proportion said they had attended a lecture, meeting, or social occasion in a school building.

|                                                                       | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Well-educated teachers and principals                                 | 50 |
| Emphasis on basics such as reading, writing, and computation          | 49 |
| Teachers and principals personally interested in progress of students | 44 |
| Good parent/teacher relationships                                     | 40 |
| Careful check on student progress and effort                          | 32 |
| An orderly but not rigid atmosphere                                   | 27 |
| Useful materials and adequate supplies                                | 25 |
| Small classes                                                         | 25 |
| Special classes for handicapped students                              | 24 |
| High goals and expectations on part of students                       | 19 |
| Wide variety of vocational courses                                    | 18 |
| Advanced classes for the gifted                                       | 12 |
| Extracurricular activities                                            | 6  |
| Successful athletic teams                                             | 4  |
| DK                                                                    | 6  |

## Factors Affecting School Quality

### School Size

Do you think high schools today are getting too large or aren't they large enough? (1973)

|                   | %  |
|-------------------|----|
| Getting too large | 57 |
| Not large enough  | 13 |
| Just right        | 15 |
| DK                | 15 |

### Class Size

In some school districts, the typical class has as many as 35 students; in other districts, only 20. In regard to the achievement or progress of students, do you think small classes make a great deal of difference, little difference, or no difference at all? (1973)

|                          | %  |
|--------------------------|----|
| Great deal of difference | 79 |
| Little difference        | 11 |
| No difference            | 6  |
| DK                       | 4  |

### City Size

In general, do you think that students today get a better education in schools that are located in small communities or in schools located in big cities? (1977)

|                     | %  |
|---------------------|----|
| Small communities   | 68 |
| Big cities          | 11 |
| Makes no difference | 12 |
| DK                  | 9  |

### Additional Money

In some school districts, about \$600 is spent per child per school year; some school districts spend more than \$1,200. Do you think this additional expenditure of money makes a great deal of difference in the achievement or progress of students — or little difference? (1973)

|                          | %  |
|--------------------------|----|
| Great deal of difference | 39 |
| Little difference        | 38 |
| None                     | 10 |
| DK                       | 13 |

## Acceptance of Education Innovations

### Readiness for Change

Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they too ready to try new ideas? (1970, 1974)

|                            | 1970<br>% | 1974<br>% |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Not interested enough      | 20        | 24        |
| Too ready to try new ideas | 21        | 20        |
| Just about right           | 32        | 32        |
| DK                         | 27        | 24        |

In the schools in your community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough? (1971)

|             | %  |
|-------------|----|
| Too many    | 22 |
| Not enough  | 24 |
| About right | 32 |
| DK          | 22 |

### Open Schools

Do you happen to know what is meant by the "open school" idea or concept? (1975)

|              | %  |
|--------------|----|
| Knew         | 27 |
| Didn't know  | 60 |
| Weren't sure | 13 |

In your own words, how would you describe an "open" school? (1975)

Most of the 27% who claimed to understand the concept proved that they did. A negligible few said it meant "open to all."

How do you feel about "open" schools? Do you approve or disapprove of them? (1975)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Approve    | 13 |
| Disapprove | 10 |
| DK         | 4  |

## Other Kinds of Schools

For students who are not interested in, or are bored with, the usual kind of education, it has been proposed that new kinds of local schools be established. They usually place more responsibility upon the student for what he learns and how he learns it. Some use the community as their laboratory and do not use the usual kind of classrooms. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea? (1973)

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
|           | %  |
| Good idea | 62 |
| Poor idea | 26 |
| DK        | 12 |

In some U.S. cities parents of school children are being given the choice of sending their children to a special public school that has strict discipline, including a dress code, and that puts emphasis on the three R's. If you lived in one of these cities, and had children of school age, would you send them to such a school or not? (1975)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 57 |
| No  | 33 |
| DK  | 10 |

## Ungraded Schools

Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools? (1972, 1975, 1980)

|        | 1972 | 1975 | 1980 |
|--------|------|------|------|
|        | %    | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 71   | 64   | 62   |
| Oppose | 22   | 28   | 30   |
| DK     | 7    | 8    | 8    |

Should high school courses be arranged to make it possible for some students to finish one year of college work while they are still in high school, so that these students can graduate from college in three years instead of four? (1977)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 63 |
| No  | 31 |
| DK  | 6  |

## Performance Contracts

In some public schools, educational companies are given contracts to put in new methods to teach the children in elementary schools certain basic skills, such as how to read. These are called 'performance contracts.' If the children don't reach a certain level of achievement, the company doesn't get paid for those children who fail to reach the standard. Would you like to have such contracts made here, in this community, if the overall school costs remain about the same? (1971)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 49 |
| No  | 28 |
| DK  | 23 |

# Finances

## Awareness

Do you happen to know what it costs per child, per school year, in the local public schools? How much? (1979)\*

| Named a figure:   | %  |
|-------------------|----|
| Under \$700       | 17 |
| \$700 - \$1,299   | 40 |
| \$1,300 - \$1,899 | 18 |
| \$1,900 - \$2,499 | 10 |
| \$2,500 and over  | 15 |

\*The National Center for Education Statistics estimated the cost per student for the 1979-80 school year at \$2,469.

It costs taxpayers about \$2 an hour for each student for each class he or she attends — or about \$10 for each school day. Are these figures higher, lower, or about the same as what you had thought? (1980)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Higher | 29 |
| Lower  | 19 |
| Same   | 34 |
| DK     | 18 |

## Financial Sources

There has been much discussion in the nation about the best way to finance the public schools. Do you happen to know where *most* of the money comes from to finance schools in this community? (1978)\*

|                        | %  |
|------------------------|----|
| Property taxes (local) | 49 |
| Federal sources        | 11 |
| State sources          | 16 |
| DK                     | 24 |

\*In 1978, according to Gallup, in the nation as a whole, 48% of revenues to finance the public schools came from local sources, 44% from the state, and 8% from the federal government.

Are you, yourself, satisfied or dissatisfied with this way of raising the money? (1978)

|                  | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | DK |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Those who named: | %         | %            | %  |
| Property taxes   | 43        | 52           | 5  |
| Federal sources  | 68        | 21           | 11 |
| State sources    | 68        | 20           | 12 |

Do you happen to know whether the schools in your school district receive any money from the federal government (the government in Washington)? (1975)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 50 |
| No  | 6  |
| DK  | 44 |

What part of the school budget in your district do you think this federal money represents — a small part, a fairly sizable part, or a very large part of the budget? (1975) (Asked of those who said that the schools in their school district receive money from the federal government.)

|         |    |
|---------|----|
|         | %  |
| Small   | 17 |
| Sizable | 18 |
| Large   | 6  |
| DK      | 9  |

## Attitudes Toward Spending, Forms of Taxation, Etc.

Do you think money is spent foolishly by the school authorities or the local school board? (1969)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 26 |
| No  | 65 |
| DK  | 9  |

Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose? (1969-1983)

|                    | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1981 | 1983 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| Would vote for     | 45   | 37   | 40   | 36   | 30   | 39   |
| Would vote against | 49   | 56   | 52   | 56   | 60   | 52   |
| DK                 | 6    | 7    | 8    | 8    | 10   | 9    |

Would you be willing to pay more taxes to raise the standards of education in the United States? (1983) (Followed questions on National Commission on Excellence. See page 79.)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 58 |
| No  | 33 |
| DK  | 9  |

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property? (1970-1972)

|        | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 |
|--------|------|------|------|
|        | %    | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 54   | 46   | 55   |
| Oppose | 34   | 37   | 34   |
| DK     | 12   | 17   | 11   |

It has been suggested that state government through increased taxes pay more of the cost of local school expenses. Would you favor or oppose an increase in state taxes for this purpose? (1973)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 40 |
| Oppose | 50 |
| DK     | 10 |

It has been suggested that a new kind of national sales tax, sometimes called a value-added tax, should be adopted to help reduce local property taxes that now support public schools. Do you favor or oppose such a tax? (1972)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 35 |
| Oppose | 51 |
| DK     | 14 |

Did you happen to vote in the last school bond election? (1969)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 41 |
| No  | 49 |
| DK  | 10 |

Can you recall how you voted? Did you vote for or against the bond? (1969) (Asked only of those who answered "Yes" to the question above)

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
|              | %  |
| For          | 26 |
| Against      | 10 |
| Can't recall | 5  |

At present some public school districts spend less than others per child in school. Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to reduce these differences? (1974)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 66 |
| Oppose | 22 |
| DK     | 12 |

Would you approve or disapprove of a law in this state that would put a top limit on the amount of money which could be included in the local public schools' annual budget? (1979)

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
|                         | %  |
| Approve                 | 33 |
| Disapprove              | 42 |
| DK                      | 21 |
| Already have such a law | 4  |

When federal agencies appropriate money for educational programs, they usually require the schools that receive this money to spend it as these agencies direct. Should, or should not, this be changed to permit local school authorities to decide how the money is to be spent? (1977)

|            |    |
|------------|----|
|            | %  |
| Should     | 62 |
| Should not | 29 |
| DK         | 9  |

## Reducing Expenses

School enrollments in many parts of the nation have declined because of a lower birthrate. If this were to happen here, would you suggest that school expenditures be reduced accordingly? (1976)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 55 |
| No  | 35 |
| DK  | 10 |

Suppose your local school board were "forced" to cut some things from school costs because there is not enough money. I am going to read you a list of many ways that have been suggested for reducing school costs. Will you tell me, in the case of each one, whether your opinion is favorable or unfavorable? (1971, 1976, 1982) (Sixteen proposed means of cost cutting offered in 1971; only eight in 1976 and nine in 1982)

|                                                                                                      | 1971           |                  |         |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------|----------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                      | Favorable<br>% | Unfavorable<br>% | DK<br>% | Favorable<br>% | Unfavorable<br>% | DK<br>% | No Opinion<br>% | No Opinion<br>% | No Opinion<br>% |
| Cancel any subjects that do not have the minimum number of students registered                       | 52             | 35               | 13      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Have the school run on a 12-month basis with 3 months of vacation for students, 1 month for teachers | 47             | 38               | 15      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Make parents responsible for getting children to and from school                                     | 39             | 51               | 10      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Charge rent for all textbooks instead of providing them free                                         | 34             | 56               | 10      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Cut out kindergarten                                                                                 | 19             | 69               | 12      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Reduce janitorial and maintenance services                                                           | 15             | 72               | 13      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Keep present textbooks and library books although it may mean using outdated material                | 20             | 68               | 12      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
| Reduce the amount of supplies and materials teachers use in classrooms                               | 26             | 58               | 16      |                |                  |         |                 |                 |                 |
|                                                                                                      | Favorable      |                  |         | Unfavorable    |                  |         | No Opinion      |                 |                 |
|                                                                                                      | 1971           | 1976             | 1982    | 1971           | 1976             | 1982    | 1971            | 1976            | 1982            |
|                                                                                                      | %              | %                | %       | %              | %                | %       | %               | %               | %               |
| Reduce the number of administrative personnel*                                                       | 50             | 72               | 71      | 32             | 19               | 22      | 18              | 9               | 7               |
| Reduce the number of counselors on the staff                                                         | 32             | 52               | 49      | 49             | 38               | 42      | 19              | 10              | 9               |
| Reduce the number of subjects offered                                                                | 30             | 39               | 35      | 57             | 53               | 58      | 13              | 8               | 7               |
| Cut out the 12th grade by covering in 3 years what is now covered in 4                               | 29             | 36               | 31      | 58             | 58               | 62      | 13              | 6               | 7               |
| Cut out after-school activities like bands, clubs, athletics, etc.                                   | 23             | 31               | 29      | 68             | 63               | 64      | 9               | 6               | 7               |
| Reduce the number of teachers by increasing class sizes*                                             | 11             | 23               | 18      | 79             | 70               | 76      | 10              | 7               | 6               |
| Cut all teachers' salaries by a set percentage                                                       | 12             | 18               | 17      | 77             | 74               | 76      | 11              | 8               | 7               |
| Reduce special services such as speech, reading, and hearing therapy                                 | 10             | 10               | 11      | 80             | 85               | 83      | 10              | 5               | 6               |
| Reduce instruction in the basics—reading, writing, and arithmetic                                    | —              | —                | 3       | —              | —                | 93      | —               | —               | 4               |

\*Gallup's interviewers do not give information to respondents. Thus they could not explain that teacher salaries typically constitute some 80% of a district's total operating expense. In many larger districts, increasing class size by one student could "save" more money than the elimination of 60% of the administrative staff.

Do you think that school buildings are more expensive than they need to be? (1969, 1972)

|                               | 1969 | 1972 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|
|                               | %    | %    |
| Yes, in general               | 26   | 53   |
| Yes, too fancy, too elaborate | 14   | —    |
| No, in general                | 42   | 35   |
| No, they are not good enough  | 7    | —    |
| DK                            | 11   | 12   |

To utilize school buildings to the full extent, would you favor keeping the schools open the year around? Parents could choose which three of the four quarters of the year their children could attend. Do you approve or disapprove of this idea? (1970, 1972)

|            | 1970 | 1972 |
|------------|------|------|
|            | %    | %    |
| Approve    | 42   | 53   |
| Disapprove | 49   | 41   |
| DK         | 9    | 6    |

In order to save energy (fuel oil, gas), it has been suggested that the schools be closed in the middle of the winter. Children would make up lost school time by starting the school year in late August and ending the school year around the first of July. Would you favor or oppose adopting this plan here? (1977)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 36 |
| Oppose | 56 |
| DK     | 8  |

Many schools are being closed today because of a drop in enrollment. What suggestions do you have as to how vacant school buildings might be used? (1978)

1. Community activities
2. Adult education centers
3. Vocational and job training
4. Cultural centers (museums, libraries, concerts, exhibitions, theaters)
5. Senior citizen centers
6. Youth activities
7. Make into offices
8. Use for governmental agencies
9. Sell or rent
10. Convert to apartments

One way which has been suggested to reduce school costs would be to interest local citizen volunteers to take over all extracurricular activities, such as athletic coaching, directing the band, directing plays, etc. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea? (1981)

|      | %  |
|------|----|
| Good | 52 |
| Bad  | 41 |
| DK   | 7  |

In some schools, teachers and students have fund-raising events to finance special projects for school equipment, after-school activities, and the like. Do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea for the schools to permit these events? (1971)

|      | %  |
|------|----|
| Good | 84 |
| Poor | 11 |
| DK   | 5  |

Does your child bring money from home to pay for anything, except lunch, in school? (1971)(Asked only of parents of school children.)

|     |          |
|-----|----------|
|     | <b>%</b> |
| Yes | 59       |
| No  | 39       |
| DK  | 2        |

If "Yes," for what? (1971)

|                                           |          |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|
|                                           | <b>%</b> |
| Books                                     | 9        |
| Supplies for class (general)              | 7        |
| Travel expenses for field trips           | 5        |
| Athletic fees/equipment                   | 3        |
| School newspaper/school-related newspaper | 3        |
| Fees for special programs                 | 3        |
| Club dues/class dues                      | 2        |
| Parties/dances                            | 2        |
| Charitable contributions/events           | 2        |
| General school activities                 | 1        |
| Miscellaneous                             | 9        |

Do you think such fees should be charged? (1971)

|     |          |
|-----|----------|
|     | <b>%</b> |
| Yes | 47       |
| No  | 10       |
| DK  | 2        |

## Federal Government and the Schools

### Department of Education

In your opinion, should education be taken out of the present Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and made a separate department of the federal government, or not? (1977)

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
|        | <b>%</b> |
| Favor  | 40       |
| Oppose | 45       |
| DK     | 15       |

As you may know, a new federal Department of Education has been established with Cabinet status. We would like to know what you think this new department should give special attention to in the next five years. Will you choose five of the areas listed on this card which you think are most important? (1980)

|                                                                                             | %  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Basic education (reading, writing, arithmetic)                                           | 69 |
| 2. Vocational training (training students for jobs)                                         | 56 |
| 3. Improving teacher training and education                                                 | 46 |
| 4. Helping students choose careers                                                          | 46 |
| 5. Parent training to help parents become more fully involved in their children's education | 45 |
| 6. Helping more students obtain a college education                                         | 35 |
| 7. Developing individual educational plans for every child                                  | 33 |
| 8. Providing more opportunities for gifted students                                         | 25 |
| 9. Preschool education                                                                      | 24 |
| 10. Lifelong learning (continuing education through adult life)                             | 23 |
| 11. Better educational use of television                                                    | 20 |
| 12. International education, including foreign language study                               | 19 |
| 13. Improving opportunities for women and minorities                                        | 18 |

Two years ago a new Department of Education was established in the federal government in Washington, D.C. The present administration now says such a department is not needed and that its functions should be performed by a smaller agency or by other departments of the government. Do you agree or disagree with this view? (1981)

|                           | %  |
|---------------------------|----|
| Agree that DOE not needed | 49 |
| Disagree, is needed       | 29 |
| DK                        | 22 |

## Federal Influence

Thinking about the future, would you like the federal government in Washington to have more influence, or less influence, in determining the educational program of the local public schools? (1982)

|                | %  |
|----------------|----|
| More influence | 28 |
| Less influence | 54 |
| Same as now    | 10 |
| DK             | 8  |

Some people worry that the state and the federal government are adopting many regulations regarding educational matters which don't take account of the local school situation. Do you think these actions by the state and the federal government are more likely to help, or more likely to hinder, public school education here? (1978)

|                    | %  |
|--------------------|----|
| Help               | 23 |
| Hinder             | 44 |
| Make no difference | 5  |
| DK                 | 28 |

# Private and Parochial Schools

## Reasons for Increase in Nonpublic Schools

In recent years the number of nonpublic schools, that is, private and church-related schools, has increased in many parts of the nation. Why do you think this has happened? (1981)

### In order of times mentioned

1. Poor educational standards in the public schools; education in nonpublic schools is superior
2. Integration/forced busing/racial problems
3. Greater discipline in nonpublic schools
4. More attention given to religion in nonpublic schools
5. Too many drug and alcohol problems in the public schools
6. Overcrowding in the public schools

## Favor/Oppose Increase

In general, do you think this increase in nonpublic schools is a good thing or a bad thing for the nation? (1981)

|                                               | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Increase in nonpublic schools is a good thing | 49 |
| Is a bad thing                                | 30 |
| DK                                            | 21 |

## Government Tax Aid to Nonpublic Schools

It has been proposed that some government tax money be used to help parochial (church-related) schools make ends meet. How do you feel about this? Do you favor or oppose giving some government tax money to help parochial schools? (1970, 1981)

|        | 1970 | 1981 |
|--------|------|------|
|        | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 48   | 40   |
| Oppose | 44   | 51   |
| DK     | 8    | 9    |

These proposals are being suggested to amend the U.S. Constitution. As I read each one will you tell me if you favor or oppose it.

An amendment to the Constitution that would permit government financial aid to parochial schools? (1974)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 52 |
| Oppose | 35 |
| DK     | 13 |

In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child for his education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the "voucher system." Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country? (1970, 1971, 1981, 1983)

|        | 1970 | 1971 | 1981 | 1983 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|
|        | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 43   | 38   | 43   | 51   |
| Oppose | 46   | 44   | 41   | 38   |
| DK     | 11   | 18   | 16   | 11   |

## Private Schools Versus Public Schools

Suppose you could send your eldest child to a private school, tuition free. Which would you prefer — to send him or her to a private school or to a public school? (1982) (Asked of parents of public school children.)

|                | %  |
|----------------|----|
| Private school | 45 |
| Public school  | 47 |
| DK             | 8  |

Why do you say that? (1982) (Asked of public school parents who said they would prefer private school if tuition free.)

|                              | %  |
|------------------------------|----|
| Higher standard of education | 28 |
| Better discipline            | 27 |
| More individual attention    | 21 |
| Smaller class size           | 17 |
| Better curriculum            | 12 |
| Quality of teachers          | 11 |
| Religious/moral reasons      | 5  |
| Parents have more input      | 3  |
| Miscellaneous                | 10 |
| DK                           | 1  |

## Curriculum

### General Attitudes

Do you think the school curriculum in your community needs to be changed to meet today's needs or do you think it already meets today's needs? (1970, 1982)

|                     | 1970<br>% | 1982<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Needs to be changed | 31        | 36        |
| Already meets needs | 46        | 42        |
| DK                  | 23        | 22        |

In what ways do you feel it needs to be changed? (1982) (Asked of those who answered "needs to be changed" to above question.)

|                            | %  |
|----------------------------|----|
| More emphasis on basics    | 26 |
| More practical instruction | 14 |
| More vocational classes    | 11 |
| Raise academic standards   | 8  |
| Greater variety of classes | 5  |
| More computer courses      | 4  |
| More math courses          | 3  |
| More foreign language      | 3  |
| Upgrade textbooks          | 3  |
| Stress religion more       | 3  |
| More English courses       | 2  |
| More science courses       | 2  |
| Remove sex education       | 1  |
| More for gifted students   | 1  |
| More arts                  | 1  |
| Better college preparation | 1  |
| Add health classes         | 1  |
| Miscellaneous              | 5  |
| DK                         | 7  |

Now, thinking about your oldest child in school (elementary, junior, or senior high — not college): Do you think he (she) is learning the things you believe he (she) should be learning? (1973, 1983)

|     | 1973 | 1983 |
|-----|------|------|
|     | %    | %    |
| Yes | 81   | 74   |
| No  | 14   | 20   |
| DK  | 5    | 6    |

## Decision on Curriculum

In your opinion, who should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools here — the federal government, the state government, or the local school board? (1980)

|                    | %  |
|--------------------|----|
| Federal government | 9  |
| State government   | 15 |
| Local school board | 68 |
| DK                 | 8  |

## Back to Basics

Have you heard or read about the back-to-basics movement in education? (1977)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 41 |
| No  | 57 |
| DK  | 2  |

Do you favor or oppose this back-to-basics movement? (1977) (Asked of those who were aware of the term.)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 83 |
| Oppose | 11 |
| DK     | 6  |

When this term is used, do you think of anything besides reading, writing, and arithmetic? (1977)

The responses to this question, on the whole, indicate that the public regarded the basics largely in terms of the traditional three subject areas.

Other subjects were mentioned — history, geography, spelling, citizenship, science, music, art, physical education — but not frequently.

However, many respondents thought of the term, not in relation to subjects or courses, but in relation to the educational process itself. Thus, "back to basics" was interpreted as meaning a return to schooling of earlier years. To many respondents it meant "respect for teachers," "good manners," "politeness," "obedience," "respect for elders," "structured classrooms," "back to the old ways of teaching."

Is it your impression that the local public school system gives enough attention, or not enough attention, to reading, writing, and arithmetic? (1980) (Asked of all respondents with children in school.)

|            | Public School Parents | Private School Parents |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|            | %                     | %                      |
| Enough     | 34                    | 17                     |
| Not enough | 61                    | 72                     |
| DK         | 5                     | 11                     |

Public high schools can offer students a wide variety of courses, or they can concentrate on fewer basic courses such as English, mathematics, history, and science. Which of these two policies do you think the local high school(s) should follow in planning their curriculum — a wide variety of courses or fewer but more basic courses? (1979, 1981)

|                            | 1979 | 1981 |
|----------------------------|------|------|
|                            | %    | %    |
| Favor a wide variety       | 44   | 43   |
| Favor fewer, basic courses | 49   | 52   |
| DK                         | 7    | 5    |

Which three of these educational programs (card lists) would you like your local elementary school (grades 1-6) to give more attention to? Junior and senior high schools (grades 7-12)? (1972)

|                                                                                                    | Rank Order |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
|                                                                                                    | Elementary | Jr. & Sr.<br>High School |
| Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic                                   | 1          | 7                        |
| Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves                                   | 2          | 2                        |
| Teaching students to respect law and authority                                                     | 3          | 1                        |
| Teaching students how to get along with others                                                     | 4          | 4                        |
| Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening                                             | 5          | 5                        |
| Teaching students vocational skills                                                                | 6          | 3                        |
| Teaching students health and physical education                                                    | 7          | 8                        |
| Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday (that is, history, geography, and civics) | 8          | 6                        |
| Teaching students how to compete with others                                                       | 9          | 9                        |

## Subjects Required

Would you look over this card which lists high school subjects. If you were the one to decide, what subjects would you require every public high school student who plans to go on to college to take? (1981, 1983)

|                            | Would<br>Require<br>% | 1981<br>Number Years<br>Required | 1983<br>Would<br>Require<br>% |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mathematics                | 94                    | 4                                | 92                            |
| English                    | 91                    | 4                                | 88                            |
| History/U.S. gov't         | 83                    | 4                                | 76                            |
| Science                    | 75                    | 4                                | 76                            |
| Business                   | 60                    | 2                                | 55                            |
| Foreign language           | 54                    | 2                                | 50                            |
| Health education           | 47                    | 1 to 2                           | 43                            |
| Physical education         | 44                    | 1 to 2                           | 41                            |
| Industrial arts/homemaking | 34                    | 2                                | 32                            |
| Art                        | 28                    | 2                                | 19                            |
| Music                      | 26                    | 1                                | 18                            |

What about those public high school students who do *not plan to go to college* when they graduate. Which courses would you require them to take? (1981, 1983)

|                     | Would<br>Require<br>% | 1981<br>Number Years<br>Required | 1983<br>Would<br>Require<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mathematics         | 91                    | 4                                | 87                            |
| English             | 89                    | 4                                | 83                            |
| Business            | 75                    | 4                                | 65                            |
| History/U.S. gov't  | 71                    | 2                                | 63                            |
| Vocational training | 64                    | 4                                | 74                            |
| Science             | 58                    | 2                                | 53                            |
| Health education    | 46                    | 2                                | 42                            |
| Physical education  | 43                    | 4                                | 40                            |
| Foreign language    | 21                    | 2                                | 19                            |
| Art                 | 20                    | 1                                | 16                            |
| Music               | 20                    | 1                                | 16                            |

(If foreign language) What foreign language or languages should be required? (1983)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Spanish  | 50 |
| French   | 34 |
| German   | 16 |
| Latin    | 8  |
| Russian  | 8  |
| Japanese | 6  |
| Other    | 4  |
| DK       | 24 |

## Special Instruction Requirements

In addition to regular courses, high schools offer instruction in other areas. As I read off these areas, one at a time, would you tell me whether you feel this instruction should be required or should not be required for all high school students. (1981, 1983) (Percentages are for those who responded "should be required.")

|                           | 1981<br>% | 1983<br>% |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Drug abuse                | 82        | 81        |
| Alcohol abuse             | 78        | 76        |
| Driver education          | 71        | 72        |
| Computer training         | 43        | 72        |
| Parenting/parent training | 64        | 58        |
| Dangers of nuclear waste  | *         | 56        |
| Race relations            | *         | 56        |
| Communism/socialism       | *         | 51        |
| Dangers of nuclear war    | *         | 46        |

\*Not included in 1981 list

## Essential Subjects

Public schools can teach many different things. Will you tell me, in the case of each of these high school subjects, whether you regard it as essential for all students, or not too essential? (1979)

|                                          | Essential<br>% | Not Too<br>Essential<br>% | DK<br>% |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Mathematics                              | 97             | 1                         | 2       |
| English grammar and composition          | 94             | 3                         | 3       |
| Civics, government                       | 88             | 8                         | 4       |
| U.S. history                             | 86             | 11                        | 3       |
| Science                                  | 83             | 14                        | 3       |
| Geography                                | 81             | 16                        | 3       |
| Physical education                       | 76             | 21                        | 3       |
| Interdependence of nations, foreign rel. | 60             | 32                        | 8       |
| Music                                    | 44             | 52                        | 4       |
| Foreign language                         | 43             | 53                        | 4       |
| Art                                      | 37             | 58                        | 5       |

## Sex Education

Do you approve or disapprove of schools giving courses in sex education? (1970)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Approve    | 65 |
| Disapprove | 28 |
| DK         | 7  |

Would you approve or disapprove if these courses discussed birth control? (1970)

|            |    |
|------------|----|
| Approve    | 56 |
| Disapprove | 35 |
| DK         | 9  |

Do you feel the public *high* schools should or should not include sex education in their instructional program? ... the public *elementary* schools? (1981)

|                    | Should<br>% | Should Not<br>% | DK<br>% |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| High schools       | 70          | 22              | 8       |
| Elementary schools | 45          | 48              | 7       |

1981  
Topics That Should Be Included  
(Responses of Parents Who Favor Sex Education)

|                                 | In High School<br>% | In Elementary School<br>% |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Venereal disease             | 85                  | 46                        |
| 2. Birth control                | 77                  | 38                        |
| 3. The biology of reproduction  | 78                  | 85                        |
| 4. Premarital sex               | 59                  | 30                        |
| 5. Abortion                     | 52                  | 20                        |
| 6. Nature of sexual intercourse | 48                  | 35                        |
| 7. Homosexuality                | 40                  | 19                        |

1981  
Topics That Should Be Included  
(Responses of All Those Who Favor Sex Education)

|                                 | In High School<br>% | In Elementary School<br>% |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Venereal disease             | 84                  | 52                        |
| 2. Birth control                | 79                  | 45                        |
| 3. The biology of reproduction  | 77                  | 83                        |
| 4. Premarital sex               | 60                  | 40                        |
| 5. Abortion                     | 54                  | 26                        |
| 6. Nature of sexual intercourse | 53                  | 36                        |
| 7. Homosexuality                | 45                  | 23                        |

## Science and Technology

Some observers say that the United States is losing its lead in science and technology to Japan and Germany. Do you think this is true or not true? (1981)

|                 | %  |
|-----------------|----|
| U.S. losing     | 48 |
| U.S. not losing | 38 |
| DK              | 14 |

## Ethics and Values

Would you favor or oppose instruction in the schools that would deal with values and ethical behavior? (1975, 1981)

|        | 1975* | 1981 |
|--------|-------|------|
|        | %     | %    |
| Favor  | 79    | 70   |
| Oppose | 15    | 17   |
| DK     | 6     | 13   |

\*Words used in 1975 were "morals and moral behavior."

Parents now have responsibility for the moral behavior of their children. Do you think that the schools should take on a share of this responsibility, or not? (1976)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Should     | 67 |
| Should not | 30 |
| DK         | 3  |

## School Prayers

These proposals are being suggested to amend the U.S. Constitution. As I read each one, will you tell me if you favor or oppose it:

An amendment to the Constitution that would permit prayers to be said in the public schools. (1974)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 77 |
| Oppose | 17 |
| DK     | 6  |

## Citizenship Education

Young people who reach the age of 18 now have the right to vote. The question arises as to whether high school courses give students enough information about the Constitution, about government and the political process, to enable them to vote intelligently. What is your impression — how good a job do the schools perform in this respect: good, fair, or poor? (1974)

|      | %  |
|------|----|
| Good | 33 |
| Fair | 33 |
| Poor | 16 |
| DK   | 18 |

## International Citizenship

Should students spend more time than they now do learning about other nations of the world and the way people live there, or do you think they spend enough time now? (1980)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| More time  | 45 |
| Enough now | 46 |
| DK         | 9  |

## English for Non-English-Speaking

Many families who come from other countries have children who cannot speak English. Should or should not these children be required to learn English in special classes before they are enrolled in the public schools? (1980)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 82 |
| No  | 13 |
| DK  | 5  |

## Other Innovations

in some schools, time spent by students in classrooms is being reduced to give more time for independent study, that is, carrying out learning projects on their own. Should the local schools give more time to independent study than they presently do, or should they give less time? (1971)

|             | %  |
|-------------|----|
| More        | 31 |
| Less        | 22 |
| About right | 25 |
| DK          | 22 |

A plan has been suggested to enable all juniors and seniors in high school to perform some kind of community service for course credit — such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers. Would you like to have such a plan adopted in this community, or not? (1978)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 87 |
| No  | 8  |
| DK  | 5  |

## Vocational Education

Do you think that the school curriculum should give more emphasis or less emphasis to careers and career preparation in high school? (1976)

|      | %  |
|------|----|
| More | 80 |
| Less | 5  |
| Same | 11 |
| DK   | 4  |

Some people feel that too much emphasis is placed in the high schools on preparing students for college and not enough emphasis on preparing students for occupations that do not require a college degree. Do you agree or disagree? (1971)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Agree    | 68 |
| Disagree | 23 |
| DK       | 9  |

Should public schools give more emphasis to a study of trades, professions, and businesses to help students decide on their careers? (1973)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 90 |
| No  | 7  |
| DK  | 3  |

Do you think the *elementary* school curriculum should, or should not, include information about jobs and careers? (1976)

|            |    |
|------------|----|
|            | %  |
| Should     | 52 |
| Should not | 39 |
| DK         | 9  |

In your opinion, should vocational education be separated from the school and conducted in a separate location by other agencies such as business or industry? (1978)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 32 |
| No  | 53 |
| DK  | 15 |

## Parents' Experience: Most Valuable Subjects

What subjects that you studied or experiences that you gained in high school have you found to be most useful in later life? (1978)

### Subjects in Order of Times Mentioned

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Commercial subjects
4. Extracurricular activities
5. Shop
6. History
7. Science
8. Foreign language
9. Psychology
10. Domestic science

And now thinking only of the subjects that were offered in your high school, are there any subjects you *wish* you had studied and didn't that would be of special help to you now? (1978)

### Subjects in Order of Times Mentioned

1. Typing and other secretarial skills
2. Mathematics
3. Shop
4. Foreign languages
5. Science
6. English
7. History
8. Civics
9. Home Economics
10. Music

## Graduation Requirements

What requirements, if any, would you set for graduation from high school for those students who do *not* plan to go on to college but who plan to take a job or job training following graduation? I'll read off a number of requirements and then you tell me how important each one is as a requirement for graduation for these students. We would like to know whether you think it is very important, fairly important, or not important. (1975, 1978)

|                                                                                                                 | Very Important % |      | Fairly Important % |      | Not Important % |      | DK % |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------------|------|------|------|
|                                                                                                                 | 1975             | 1978 | 1975               | 1978 | 1975            | 1978 | 1975 | 1978 |
| How important is it that these students . .                                                                     |                  |      |                    |      |                 |      |      |      |
| ... be able to write a letter of application using correct grammar and correct spelling?                        | 92               | 90   | 6                  | 9    | 1               | *    | 1    | 1    |
| ... be able to read well enough to follow an instruction manual for home appliances?                            | 96               | 86   | 3                  | 12   | *               | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| ... know enough arithmetic to be able to figure out such a problem as the total square feet in a room?          | 87               | 84   | 10                 | 14   | 2               | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| ... know the health hazards of smoking and the use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs?                      | †                | 83   | †                  | 14   | †               | 2    | †    | 1    |
| ... have a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, nurse's aide, business machines?                      | 85               | 79   | 12                 | 17   | 2               | 3    | 1    | 1    |
| ... know something about the U.S. government, the political parties, voting procedures?                         | 75               | 66   | 21                 | 30   | 3               | 3    | 1    | 1    |
| ... know something about the history of the U.S., such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the like?       | 68               | 61   | 27                 | 31   | 4               | 7    | 1    | 1    |
| ... know something about the major nations of the world today, their kind of government, and their way of life? | 49               | 42   | 40                 | 46   | 10              | 10   | 1    | 2    |
| ... know something about the history of mankind, the great leaders in art, literature?                          | 33               | 30   | 44                 | 48   | 21              | 21   | 2    | 1    |
| ... know a foreign language?                                                                                    | 18               | 16   | 28                 | 32   | 51              | 50   | 3    | 2    |

\* Less than 1%

† Not asked in 1975

## Computers

### Availability

Does the school your child attends have a computer that students can use? (1983)

|     | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | 45                      | 47                         |
| No  | 32                      | 33                         |
| DK  | 23                      | 20                         |

(If no) Would you like the school your child attends to install a computer that students could use? (1983)

|     | Public<br>School Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School Parents<br>% |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yes | 81                            | 56                               |
| No  | 10                            | 30                               |
| DK  | 9                             | 14                               |

## Who Should Choose Instructional Material/Books?

When parents object to books or materials in textbooks on grounds of religion, politics, race, or sex discrimination, how much consideration should be given to the parents' view in deciding whether to keep these books in the school — a great deal, some, little, or none? (1975)

|              | %  |
|--------------|----|
| A great deal | 33 |
| Some         | 43 |
| Little       | 12 |
| None         | 7  |
| DK           | 5  |

Who do you feel should have the most influence in the selection of books for use in the public school classrooms and school libraries — the parents, the school board, the teachers, or the principals and school administrators? (1982)

|                                      | %  |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Teachers                             | 42 |
| Parents                              | 18 |
| Principals and school administrators | 15 |
| School boards                        | 13 |
| DK                                   | 12 |

## Schoolwork and Homework

### Working Hard/Not Hard Enough

In general, do you think elementary school children in the public schools here are made to work too hard in school and on homework, or not hard enough? ... high school? (1975, 1983)

| Elementary         | 1975<br>% | 1983<br>% |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Too hard           | 5         | 4         |
| Not hard enough    | 49        | 61        |
| About right amount | 28        | 19        |
| DK                 | 18        | 16        |

| High School        | 1975<br>% | 1983<br>% |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Too hard           | 3         | 3         |
| Not hard enough    | 54        | 65        |
| About right amount | 22        | 12        |
| DK                 | 21        | 20        |

An educator claims that children are not achieving as well in school today as they did 20 years ago because they are given about one-third less work to do in school and after school. Do you think children are assigned less work today? (1979)

|     | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes | 51                               | 59                                  |
| No  | 38                               | 22                                  |
| DK  | 11                               | 19                                  |

## Parental Help on Homework

Do you regularly help your child with his/her homework? (1977)

|                                | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes, regularly                 | 24                               | 17                                  |
| Yes, when he/she<br>needs help | 27                               | 32                                  |
| No                             | 44                               | 41                                  |
| DK                             | 5                                | 10                                  |

When the age of the eldest child is considered, parents respond in this way:

|                                | Children<br>12 Years of Age<br>And Under<br>% | Children<br>13 Years of Age<br>And Older<br>% |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Yes, regularly                 | 37                                            | 16                                            |
| Yes, when he/she<br>needs help | 34                                            | 26                                            |
| No                             | 27                                            | 58                                            |
| DK                             | 2                                             | *                                             |

\* Less than 1%

As a parent, how much time do you usually have to devote to your youngster in the evening to assist him/her with his/her homework — enough time, not enough time, or none at all? (1978)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Enough     | 64 |
| Not enough | 17 |
| None       | 13 |
| DK         | 6  |

## Time Limit on TV Viewing

Do you place definite limits on the amount of time your eldest child spends viewing television during the school week? (1977, 1981)

|                                              | Yes       |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                              | 1977<br>% | 1981<br>% |
| National Totals                              | 35        | 36        |
| Parents whose oldest child is 12<br>or under | 49        | 51        |
| Parents whose oldest child is 13<br>or older | 28        | 27        |
| Parents of child in upper half of<br>class   | *         | 41        |
| Parents of child in lower half of<br>class   | *         | 34        |

\* Not asked in 1977.

If you could get a good full-time job, would you prefer taking the job or would you prefer to continue going to school? (1974)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Job    | 22 |
| School | 78 |

## The Handicapped Student

### Support for Mainstreaming

Should physically handicapped children be put in the same classrooms with other students, or should they be put in special classes of their own? ... Mentally handicapped? (1979)

|                 | Handicapped |          |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|
|                 | Physically  | Mentally |
|                 | %           | %        |
| Same classes    | 53          | 13       |
| Special classes | 36          | 77       |
| DK              | 11          | 10       |

### Who Should Pay

Services for the physically and mentally handicapped student cost more than regular school services. When the local schools are required to provide these special services by the federal government, should the federal government pay the extra cost, or not? (1977)

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
|                               | %  |
| Federal government should pay | 82 |
| Should not pay                | 11 |
| DK                            | 7  |

## The Special Student

### Special Instruction for Students With Learning Problems

How do you feel about the spending of public school funds for special instruction and homework programs for students with *learning problems*? Do you feel that more public school funds should be spent on students with learning problems than on average students — or the same amount? (1982)

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
|                   | %  |
| More spent        | 42 |
| Same amount spent | 48 |
| Less spent        | 4  |
| DK                | 6  |

## Special Instruction for Students Who Are Gifted and Talented

How do you feel about the spending of public school funds for special instruction and homework programs for *gifted and talented students*? Do you feel that more school funds should be spent on gifted and talented students than on average students — or the same amount? (1982)

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
|                   | %  |
| More spent        | 19 |
| Same amount spent | 64 |
| Less spent        | 11 |
| DK                | 6  |

## Academic Self-Evaluation by High School Juniors and Seniors

How would you appraise your ability to convey your thoughts in writing? Read with speed and comprehension? Speak correctly, fluently, effectively? Develop new ideas, new solutions? (1970)

|                                        | Excellent<br>% | Above<br>Average<br>% | Average<br>% | Below<br>Average<br>% | Poor<br>% |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Convey your thoughts in writing        | 7              | 28                    | 60           | 4                     | 1         |
| Read with speed and comprehension      | 5              | 34                    | 48           | 12                    | 1         |
| Speak correctly, fluently, effectively | 7              | 28                    | 57           | 8                     | —         |
| Develop new ideas, new solutions       | 8              | 35                    | 50           | 7                     | —         |

Would you say that your vocabulary is excellent, above average, average, below average, poor? (1970)

| Excellent<br>% | Above<br>Average<br>% | Average<br>% | Below<br>Average<br>% | Poor<br>% |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 4              | 26                    | 62           | 8                     | —         |

# Discipline

## Parents' Definitions

When we talk about "discipline" in the schools, just what does this mean to you? (1973, 1982) (open-end)

1973

The following statements convey some idea of the wide range of views:

"Discipline is respect for the teacher on the part of the child; and respect for the child on the part of the teacher."

"Learning taking place without confusion."

"Keeping children so interested in what they are learning that obeying the rules is almost automatic."

"Discipline is self-control and a proper respect for other students, for those in authority."

"Without discipline neither school nor society can exist. The world would be bedlam."

"Proper discipline makes children happier. When they run wild, they are undone by the confusion they create."

Most respondents saw discipline as a matter of obeying rules, respecting views of parents, teachers, and others in authority, and being considerate of fellow students who wish to learn in a peaceful atmosphere.

While law and order have become almost code words for the conservative viewpoint in politics, the basic concept is held in high regard by the public. In fact, in the 1972 survey, when asked to choose from a list of nine goals of education, the public placed "teaching students to respect law and authority" as the top goal for students in grades 7-12.

1982

|                                        | %  |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Obeying rules/regulations              | 54 |
| Authority/control by teachers          | 31 |
| Respect for teachers                   | 18 |
| Students' lack of willingness to learn | 7  |
| Fighting/violence                      | 3  |
| Smoking/drugs                          | 2  |
| Miscellaneous                          | 1  |
| DK                                     | 5  |

## How Serious

How serious a problem would you say discipline is in the public schools in this community — very serious, fairly serious, not too serious, or not at all serious? (1982)

|                    | National<br>Totals<br>% | No<br>Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Very serious       | 39                      | 39                               | 37                               | 46                                  |
| Fairly serious     | 31                      | 31                               | 32                               | 31                                  |
| Not too serious    | 20                      | 18                               | 25                               | 18                                  |
| Not at all serious | 2                       | 2                                | 4                                | 2                                   |
| DK                 | 8                       | 10                               | 2                                | 3                                   |

## Discipline Too Strict

How do you feel about the discipline in the local schools — is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right? (1969-1971)

|                   | 1969<br>% | 1970<br>% | 1971<br>% |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Too strict        | 2         | 2         | 3         |
| Not strict enough | 49        | 53        | 48        |
| Just about right  | 44        | 31        | 33        |
| DK                | 5         | 14        | 16        |

(Asked of those who answered "not strict enough") Can you tell me what you mean? In what ways is discipline not strict enough? (1971)

|                                                                       | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Teachers lack authority to keep order                                 | 11 |
| Students have too much freedom; they can get away with anything       | 11 |
| Students have no respect for their teachers; pay no attention to them | 6  |
| Rules are not enforced                                                | 3  |
| Vandalism                                                             | 2  |
| Other and DK                                                          | 11 |

(Asked of those who answered "not strict enough") Who should assume more responsibility for correcting this situation? (1970)

|                       | %  |
|-----------------------|----|
| Teachers              | 16 |
| School administrators | 16 |
| Parents               | 30 |
| School board          | 6  |
| Students              | 2  |
| Other                 | 2  |
| DK                    | 2  |

## Who Should Deal with Behavior Problems?

Here are some student behavior problems which may occur in school. In your opinion, who should deal with each kind of problem — should it be the parents, the school, or the courts? (1980)

|                                                | *Parents<br>% | School<br>% | Courts<br>% | DK<br>% |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Truancy (skipping school)                      | 72            | 45          | 9           | 2       |
| Vandalism of school property                   | 44            | 39          | 50          | 2       |
| Bringing weapons to school                     | 41            | 35          | 59          | 3       |
| Fighting in school                             | 42            | 75          | 10          | 3       |
| Using alcohol or drugs on school property      | 50            | 57          | 35          | 2       |
| Striking a teacher                             | 43            | 56          | 35          | 3       |
| Stealing money or clothing from other students | 48            | 58          | 30          | 3       |

\* Multiple answers permitted.

## Causes of Disciplinary Problems

Many people say that discipline is one of the major problems of the public schools today. Would you please look over this list and tell me which reasons you think are most important to explain why there is a discipline problem? (1983)

|                                                                                                               | %  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Lack of discipline in the home                                                                                | 72 |
| Lack of respect for law and authority throughout society                                                      | 54 |
| Students who are constant troublemakers often can't be removed from school                                    | 42 |
| Some teachers are not properly trained to deal with discipline problems                                       | 42 |
| The courts have made school administrators so cautious that they don't deal severely with student misbehavior | 41 |
| Viewing television programs that emphasize crime and violence                                                 | 39 |
| Punishment is too lenient                                                                                     | 39 |
| Decline in the teaching of good manners                                                                       | 37 |
| Teachers themselves do not command respect                                                                    | 36 |
| Failure on the part of teachers to make classroom work more interesting                                       | 31 |
| One-parent families                                                                                           | 26 |

## How to Improve Situation

Some people say that if the schools and the teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear. Do you agree or disagree? (1971)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Agree    | 76 |
| Disagree | 18 |
| DK       | 6  |

## Punishment

Spanking and similar forms of physical punishment are permitted in the lower grades of some schools for children who do not respond to other forms of discipline. Do you approve or disapprove of this practice? (1970)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Approve    | 62 |
| Disapprove | 33 |
| DK         | 5  |

What should be done with a high school student who refuses to obey his teacher? (1974)

|                                                          | %  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Punitive Action:                                         |    |
| Suspend/expel                                            | 31 |
| Punish                                                   | 11 |
| Detention time                                           | 4  |
| Paddle                                                   | 7  |
| Rehabilitation:                                          |    |
| Counsel                                                  | 13 |
| Provide work/study program                               | 1  |
| Discussion with principal, teacher, juvenile authorities | 8  |
| Involve parents                                          | 22 |
| Provide special curriculum/teachers                      | 10 |
| Miscellaneous                                            | 3  |
| DK                                                       | 10 |

## Supreme Court Decision

A U.S. Supreme Court decision requires school principals to give written notice to a student and his parents and to hold a hearing when the student is suspended from school. Have you heard or read about this ruling? (1975)

|            | %  |
|------------|----|
| Yes, heard | 41 |
| No         | 55 |
| DK         | 4  |

Do you think the Court went too far in making this ruling? (1975) (Asked of those who had read or heard of the decision.)

|              | %  |
|--------------|----|
| Yes, too far | 26 |
| No           | 67 |
| DK           | 7  |

## Financial Responsibility

Should parents be made financially responsible, or not, for damage to school property done by their children? (1978)

|             | %  |
|-------------|----|
| Yes, should | 86 |
| No          | 11 |
| DK          | 3  |

## Dress Code

Some people feel the schools do not go far enough in regulating the way boys and girls dress for school. Do you think there should be greater regulation of the way children dress for school, or less? (1969)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Greater  | 53 |
| Less     | 7  |
| OK as is | 36 |
| DK       | 4  |

## Drugs, Alcohol, and Smoking

### Drug Problems

Marijuana and other drugs are increasingly being used by students. Do you think it is a serious problem in your public schools? (1970)

Is the use of drugs by young people a serious problem in this community? (1975)

From what you have heard or read, is the use of marijuana by students enrolled in junior high (middle school) or high school here a serious problem, or not? (1978)

|     | Serious Problem  |              |                               |
|-----|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|     | In Public School | In Community | In Junior High or High School |
|     | 1970             | 1975         | 1978                          |
|     | %                | %            | %                             |
| Yes | 64               | 58           | 66                            |
| No  | 22               | 27           | 20                            |
| DK  | 14               | 15           | 14                            |

What about hard drugs (heroin, cocaine, etc.)? Is it a serious problem among [junior or senior high school] students here, or not? (1978)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 35 |
| No  | 41 |
| DK  | 24 |

### Schools Teaching About Drugs

Do you feel that the local public schools are doing a good job of teaching the bad effects of drug use? (1970)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 39 |
| No  | 25 |
| DK  | 36 |

### Alcohol Problems

What about use of alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) by students here? Is it a serious problem, or not? (1978)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 64 |
| No  | 19 |
| DK  | 17 |

|                                                                                                     |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| What about alcoholic drinks? (Is it a serious problem among young people in this community?) (1975) |     | %  |
|                                                                                                     | Yes | 55 |
|                                                                                                     | No  | 27 |
|                                                                                                     | DK  | 18 |

|                                                                                                                       |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Should the schools in this community require students to attend a program on the effects of drugs and alcohol? (1975) |     | %  |
|                                                                                                                       | Yes | 84 |
|                                                                                                                       | No  | 11 |
|                                                                                                                       | DK  | 5  |

## Smoking

How do you feel about smoking in public school buildings and on public school property? Do you feel that students should be prohibited from smoking in these places or not? . . . teachers, administrative staff? (1981)

|               | Students | Teachers and Administrative Staff |
|---------------|----------|-----------------------------------|
|               | %        | %                                 |
| Yes, prohibit | 71       | 60                                |
| No            | 25       | 34                                |
| DK            | 4        | 6                                 |

## Crime

### Prevalence

From what you have heard or read, is it your impression that stealing (money, clothes, lunches, books, etc.) goes on a great deal, some, or very little in the local public schools? (1974)

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
|                      | %  |
| Goes on a great deal | 33 |
| Some                 | 34 |
| Very little          | 15 |
| DK                   | 18 |

Are student gangs that disrupt the school or bother other students a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the local public schools? (1974)

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
|                       | %  |
| Big problem           | 17 |
| Somewhat of a problem | 31 |
| Not a problem         | 32 |
| DK                    | 20 |

## Fear for Child

When your child is outside at play in your own neighborhood, do you fear for his/her safety? (1977)

When he/she is at school, do you fear for his/her physical safety? (1977)

|     | In Own Neighborhood |                  | At School     |                  |
|-----|---------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
|     | Public School       | Parochial School | Public School | Parochial School |
|     | Parents             | Parents          | Parents       | Parents          |
|     | %                   | %                | %             | %                |
| Yes | 28                  | 30               | 25            | 19               |
| No  | 68                  | 61               | 69            | 73               |
| DK  | 4                   | 9                | 6             | 8                |

## Juvenile Courts

In your opinion, how good a job do the juvenile courts do here in dealing with young people who violate the law — an excellent job, a fair job or a poor job? (1976)

|               | %  |
|---------------|----|
| Excellent job | 6  |
| Fair job      | 37 |
| Poor job      | 41 |
| DK            | 16 |

## Student Rights

### Too Many/Not Enough

Generally speaking, do the local public school students in this community have too many rights and privileges, or not enough? (1972, 1975)

|            | 1972 | 1975 |
|------------|------|------|
|            | %    | %    |
| Too many   | 41   | 45   |
| Just right | 11   | 27   |
| Not enough | 33   | 10   |
| DK         | 15   | 18   |

Should high school students have more say about what goes on within the school on matters such as curriculum? ... teachers? ... school rules? ... student dress? (1970)

|              | Yes | No | DK |
|--------------|-----|----|----|
|              | %   | %  | %  |
| Curriculum   | 38  | 53 | 9  |
| Teachers     | 22  | 72 | 6  |
| School rules | 36  | 58 | 6  |
| School dress | 37  | 57 | 6  |

Should students who are 18 years of age, and now have the right to vote, have more rights and privileges than other students? (1972)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 21 |
| No  | 73 |
| DK  | 6  |

## Demonstrations

Have there been any demonstrations protesting school policies or procedures in your public schools during this present school year? (1970)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 19 |
| No  | 64 |
| DK  | 17 |

## Integration and Racial Issues

### Perceived Reasons People Move to Suburbs

As you know, many families living in the big cities of the nation are moving to the suburbs. Why, in your opinion, are they doing this? (1973)

|                                        | %  |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Big city congestion                    | 37 |
| Fear of high crime level               | 24 |
| Less pollution                         | 17 |
| To get away from minorities            | 14 |
| Better educational opportunities       | 12 |
| More open spaces                       | 11 |
| More desirable housing                 | 11 |
| Better environment for children        | 9  |
| Cities are too noisy                   | 7  |
| DK                                     | 6  |
| High city taxes                        | 6  |
| Deterioration of the big cities        | 4  |
| Miscellaneous                          | 4  |
| Lack of privacy                        | 3  |
| To create friendships                  | 3  |
| Improve one's standard of living       | 3  |
| Lower rental costs                     | 2  |
| Lower cost of living in suburbs        | 2  |
| Better employment opportunities        | 1  |
| Children get in more trouble in cities | 1  |
| Drug problem                           | 1  |
| Status symbol                          | 1  |

### Perceived Educational Opportunities

Do you think that students from all racial groups have equal educational opportunity in this community? (1981)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 79 |
| No  | 15 |
| DK  | 6  |

In your opinion, do black children and other minorities in this community have the same educational opportunities as white children? (1975)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 80 |
| No  | 14 |
| DK  | 6  |

## School Integration

Now, a question about how you feel about school integration. Do you believe more should be done — or less should be done — to integrate the schools throughout the nation? (1973)

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
|           | %  |
| More      | 30 |
| Less      | 38 |
| No change | 23 |
| DK        | 9  |

How do you feel about school integration? Do you feel it has improved the quality of education received by black students? ... white students? (1971)

|     | Blacks | Whites |
|-----|--------|--------|
|     | %      | %      |
| Yes | 43     | 23     |
| No  | 31     | 51     |
| DK  | 26     | 26     |

Do you feel it (school integration) has improved relations between blacks and whites or has it worked against better relations? (1971)

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
|                | %  |
| Improved       | 40 |
| Worked against | 35 |
| DK             | 25 |

## Busing

Do you favor busing of school children for the purpose of racial integration, or should busing for this purpose be prohibited through a constitutional amendment? (1974)

|          |    |
|----------|----|
|          | %  |
| Favor    | 18 |
| Prohibit | 72 |
| DK       | 10 |

## Parental/Citizen Involvement

### Citizen Advisory Committees

Some school boards have appointed citizen advisory committees to deal with a number of school problems such as discipline, the curriculum, textbook selection, teacher evaluation, the athletic program, and the like. The committees report their findings to the school board for possible action. If such a plan were adopted here (or exists here), which of these problems would you most like to deal with on a citizen advisory committee? (1976)

|                                       | Percent Who Would Like to<br>Serve on Such a Committee<br>% |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Discipline and related problems    | 47                                                          |
| 2. Student/teacher relations          | 31                                                          |
| 3. Career education                   | 29                                                          |
| 4. Student dropouts                   | 29                                                          |
| 5. Teacher evaluation                 | 28                                                          |
| 6. The handicapped student            | 26                                                          |
| 7. Educational costs and finances     | 22                                                          |
| 8. The curriculum                     | 21                                                          |
| 9. Education for citizenship          | 19                                                          |
| 10. Work/study programs               | 19                                                          |
| 11. Home study and work habits        | 19                                                          |
| 12. Community use of school buildings | 16                                                          |
| 13. Pupil assessment and test results | 15                                                          |
| 14. School facilities                 | 14                                                          |
| 15. Public relations of schools       | 13                                                          |
| 16. School transportation             | 12                                                          |
| 17. The athletic program              | 12                                                          |
| 18. Educational innovations           | 12                                                          |
| 19. Extracurricular activities        | 11                                                          |
| 20. Progress of recent graduates      | 9                                                           |
| None                                  | 4                                                           |
| DK                                    | 6                                                           |

Many school systems have committees made up of citizens who serve in an advisory capacity. Do you think these advisory groups should have the final decision-making authority over the *curriculum*, or should the final authority remain with the school board? ... staff selection? ... budget? (1977)

|               | Curriculum<br>% | Staff<br>Selection<br>% | Budget<br>% |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Citizen group | 17              | 15                      | 19          |
| School board  | 71              | 75                      | 70          |
| DK            | 12              | 10                      | 11          |

## Parental Influence

Do you feel that parents of public school students should have more say, less say, or do they have about the right amount of say about the following areas in the public schools? (1981)

|                                                              | More<br>Say<br>% | Less<br>Say<br>% | Right<br>Amount<br>% | DK<br>% |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1. The curriculum, i.e., the courses offered                 | 38               | 8                | 43                   | 11      |
| 2. The selection and hiring of teachers                      | 34               | 14               | 41                   | 11      |
| 3. The selection and hiring of administrators and principals | 41               | 13               | 35                   | 11      |
| 4. The books and instructional materials                     | 37               | 10               | 41                   | 12      |
| 5. The books placed in the school libraries                  | 33               | 10               | 43                   | 14      |
| 6. Teacher and administrator salaries                        | 31               | 11               | 43                   | 15      |

## Classes for Parents

A suggestion has been made that parents of school children attend one evening class a month to find out what they can do at home to improve their children's behavior and increase their interest in school work. Is it a good idea or a poor idea? (1971)

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
|           | %  |
| Good idea | 81 |
| Poor idea | 13 |
| DK        | 6  |

As a regular part of the public school educational system, it has been suggested that courses be offered at convenient times to parents in order to help them help their children in school. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea? (1976)

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
|           | %  |
| Good idea | 77 |
| Poor idea | 19 |
| DK        | 4  |

Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to support such a program? (1976)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 51 |
| No  | 21 |
| DK  | 5  |

## Discussing Child's Progress

In your opinion, should or should not parents be asked to meet with school personnel before each new school semester to examine the grades, test scores, and career goals for each child and to work out a program to be followed both in school and at home? (1980)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 84 |
| No  | 11 |
| DK  | 5  |

Have you attended any meeting since last September where the chief topic was how you, as a parent, could increase the interest of your child(ren) in his (their) school work, how and when to do homework, and other such matters that show what can be done at home to help the child in school? (1972)

|     | Public School<br>Parents | Private School<br>Parents |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|
|     | %                        | %                         |
| Yes | 37                       | 41                        |
| No  | 61                       | 56                        |
| DK  | 2                        | 3                         |

Thinking about your eldest child, have you at any time since the beginning of the school year discussed your child's progress or problems with any of your child's teachers? (1977, 1981)

#### 1977

The findings showed that 79% of all parents whose children were 12 years of age and under had talked to one or more of their child's teachers about his/her progress since the beginning of the school year. But only 55% of parents whose children were 13 years old and over had talked to any teacher.

#### 1981

Results in the 1981 survey showed that 83% of the parents whose eldest child is 12 years of age or younger had discussed the child's progress or behavior with the child's teachers. For children 13 years of age and older the figure obtained in the 1981 study was 55%.

About how often since the beginning of the school year have you had discussions with your (eldest) child's teachers? (1977, 1981)

#### 1977

In the case of parents whose eldest child was 12 years of age or younger, the median number of conferences was two.

The same figure — two — was the median for parent/teacher conferences for parents whose eldest child was 13 years of age or older.

#### 1981

| Number of Parent/Teacher<br>Conferences Since the<br>Beginning of School Year | Children<br>12 Years<br>And Under | Children<br>13 Years<br>And Older |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                                                               | %                                 | %                                 |
| One meeting                                                                   | 18                                | 28                                |
| Two meetings                                                                  | 39                                | 32                                |
| Three meetings                                                                | 17                                | 17                                |
| Four or five meetings                                                         | 15                                | 8                                 |
| Six or more                                                                   | 10                                | 14                                |
| DK                                                                            | 1                                 | 1                                 |

Thinking about the last time you spoke with your (eldest) child's teacher or teachers, did you feel that they were interested in discussing your child's work or behavior with you? (1981)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 80 |
| No  | 7  |
| DK  | 13 |

## Parent Accountability

When some children do poorly in school, some people place the blame on children, some on the children's home life, some on the school, and some on the teachers. Of course, all of these things share the blame, but where would you place the chief blame? (1971, 1972)

|           | 1971<br>% | 1972<br>%* |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Children  | 14        | 14         |
| Home life | 54        | 57         |
| School    | 6         | 6          |
| Teachers  | 8         | 12         |
| DK        | 18        | 13         |

\*Total more than 100% because of some multiple answers.

## Participation

Since September, which of the following, if any, have you yourself done? (1983)

|                                                                                                               | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the local public schools are doing      | 32                      | 22                            | 58                               | 38                                  |
| Attended a local public school athletic event                                                                 | 25                      | 18                            | 42                               | 28                                  |
| Attended a school play or concert in any local public school                                                  | 24                      | 16                            | 42                               | 36                                  |
| Met with any teachers or administrators in the local public school about your own child                       | 21                      | 4                             | 62                               | 44                                  |
| Attended a PTA meeting                                                                                        | 14                      | 4                             | 36                               | 46                                  |
| Attended any meeting dealing with the local public school situation                                           | 10                      | 7                             | 18                               | 13                                  |
| Attended a school board meeting                                                                               | 8                       | 4                             | 16                               | 24                                  |
| Written any letter to the school board, newspaper, or any other organization about the local school situation | 4                       | 3                             | 6                                | 5                                   |
| None of the above                                                                                             | 43                      | 56                            | 14                               | 22                                  |
| DK                                                                                                            | 4                       | 4                             | 2                                | 6                                   |

(Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.)

## Attendance at School Functions

Have you attended any lecture, any meeting, or any social occasion in any school building during the last year? (1969, 1979)

|     | 1969<br>% | 1979<br>% |
|-----|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 37        | 33        |
| No  | 59        | 64        |
| DK  | 4         | 3         |

Have you *ever* attended a school board meeting? (1969)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 16 |
| No  | 81 |
| DK  | 3  |

## PTA

Do you belong to the PTA or a similar group? (1969)

|     | Public<br>School<br>Parents | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|     | %                           | %                              |
| Yes | 52                          | 65                             |
| No  | 48                          | 35                             |

If "no": Since you do have children in school, what are the reasons for not belonging to the PTA or a similar group? (1969)

|                           | Public<br>School<br>Parents | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                           | %                           | %                              |
| No time                   | 22                          | 11                             |
| Not interested            | 11                          | 10                             |
| No PTA or similar group   | 9                           | 10                             |
| New in this area          | 2                           | 1                              |
| Health prevents attending | 2                           | -                              |
| Miscellaneous             | 1                           | 3                              |
| DK                        | 2                           | -                              |
|                           | 48*                         | 35*                            |

\*Total equals percent who do not belong.

Do you attend [PTA] meetings regularly during the school year, or not? (1969) (Asked of those who said, "Belong to PTA.")

|               | Public<br>School<br>Parents | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|               | %                           | %                              |
| Regularly     | 22                          | 36                             |
| Not regularly | 30                          | 28                             |
| DK            | -                           | 1                              |
|               | 52*                         | 65*                            |

\*Equals percent of those belonging to PTA.

"Will you please tell me why you do not regularly attend?" (1969) (Asked of those who said, "Do not attend regularly.")

|                           | Public<br>School<br>Parents | Parochial<br>School<br>Parents |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                           | %                           | %                              |
| No time                   | 20                          | 18                             |
| Not interested            | 6                           | 5                              |
| Health prevents attending | 1                           | 1                              |
| Miscellaneous             | 3                           | 1                              |
| DK                        | 1                           | 3                              |
|                           | 30*                         | 28*                            |

\*Equals percent of those not regularly attending PTA.

## Teachers and Teaching

### Overall Professional Image

Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career? (1969, 1972, 1980, 1981, 1983)

|     | 1969 | 1972 | 1980 | 1981 | 1983 |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
|     | %    | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| Yes | 75   | 67   | 48   | 46   | 45   |
| No  | 15   | 22   | 40   | 43   | 33   |
| DK  | 10   | 11   | 12   | 11   | 22   |

How about a *daughter*. Would you like to have a daughter of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career? (1981)

How about a *son*. Would you like to have a son of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career? (1981)

|     | Daughter | Son |
|-----|----------|-----|
|     | %        | %   |
| Yes | 46       | 43  |
| No  | 44       | 47  |
| DK  | 10       | 10  |

Now I'd like your impressions about different professions and occupations — based on your personal experience, on what you've heard or read, or anything at all. To indicate your impression please use this scale, which goes from the lowest rating of zero to the highest rating of 10. [Respondents were shown a card with the scale printed on it.] First would you rate the following professions for the amount each contributes to the general good of society. The more you feel it contributes to the good of society, the higher the number you would pick — the less you feel it contributes, the lower the number. First, how would you rate . . .? Now, for the amount of stress or pressure . . .? Now, for the amount of prestige or status people in each profession have in this community? (1981)

#### Percent Receiving Highest Rating

|                               | General Good<br>of Society | Stress or<br>Pressure | Prestige<br>or Status |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                               | %                          | %                     | %                     |
| Clergymen                     | 46                         | 26                    | 42                    |
| Medical doctors               | 41                         | 49                    | 59                    |
| Public school teachers        | 29                         | 43                    | 19                    |
| Public school principals      | 28                         | 42                    | 25                    |
| Judges                        | 23                         | 36                    | 48                    |
| Funeral directors             | 20                         | 13                    | 17                    |
| Bankers                       | 14                         | 22                    | 35                    |
| Lawyers                       | 12                         | 21                    | 31                    |
| Business executives           | 10                         | 30                    | 23                    |
| Local political officeholders | 8                          | 14                    | 16                    |
| Realtors                      | 7                          | 10                    | 6                     |
| Advertising practitioners     | 4                          | 12                    | 8                     |

#### Image of Best Teachers

Looking back on your own school experience, did you find, in general, that the most effective teachers were under 40 years of age, or over 40 years of age? (1981)

|       | %  |
|-------|----|
| Under | 32 |
| Over  | 43 |
| Same  | 21 |
| DK    | 4  |

#### Perceived Difficulty in Obtaining Teachers

Do you think this local public school system has a hard time *getting* good teachers?

Do you think this local public school system has a hard time *keeping* good teachers? (1969)

|     | Getting<br>% | Keeping<br>% |
|-----|--------------|--------------|
| Yes | 52           | 48           |
| No  | 32           | 35           |
| DK  | 16           | 17           |

Do you think there are some teachers in the local public school system who should be dropped or fired? (1969)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 38 |
| No  | 22 |
| DK  | 40 |

## Teacher Qualification and Accountability

Teachers now receive certificates to teach upon completion of their college coursework. Some people believe that teachers should be required to spend one year as interns in the schools at half pay before they are given a certificate to teach. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea? (1980)

|           | %  |
|-----------|----|
| Good idea | 56 |
| Poor idea | 36 |
| DK        | 8  |

In addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate, should those who want to become teachers also be required to pass a state board examination to prove their knowledge in the subject(s) they will teach before they are hired? (1979, 1981)

|     | 1979 | 1981 |
|-----|------|------|
|     | %    | %    |
| Yes | 85   | 84   |
| No  | 9    | 11   |
| DK  | 6    | 5    |

After they are hired, do you think teachers should be tested every few years to see if they are keeping up to date with developments in their fields? (1979)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 85 |
| No  | 10 |
| DK  | 5  |

Would you favor or oppose a system that would hold teachers and administrators more accountable for the progress of students? (1970)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 57 |
| Oppose | 21 |
| DK     | 12 |

Suppose you could choose your child's teachers. Assuming they all had about the same experience and training, what personal qualities would you look for? (1976, 1983)

1976

### Rank Order

1. The ability to communicate, to understand, to relate
2. Ability to discipline, be firm and fair
3. The ability to inspire, motivate the child
4. High moral character
5. Love of children, concern for them
6. Dedication to teaching profession, enthusiasm
7. Friendly, good personality
8. Good personal appearance, cleanliness

1983

### Rank Order

1. Ability to communicate, to understand, to relate
2. Patience
3. Ability to discipline, to be firm and fair
4. High moral character
5. Friendliness, good personality, sense of humor
6. Dedication to teaching profession, enthusiasm
7. Ability to inspire, motivate students
8. Intelligence
9. Caring about students

## Tenure

Many states have "tenure" laws, which mean that a teacher cannot be fired except by some kind of court procedure. Are you for giving teachers tenure or are you against tenure? (1970)

|         |    |
|---------|----|
|         | %  |
| For     | 35 |
| Against | 53 |
| DK      | 12 |

Do you happen to know what the word 'tenure' means as it applies to teachers' jobs? Just as you understand it, what does tenure mean? Do you favor or oppose tenure for teachers? (1977) (Based on those who knew what the term means.)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 40 |
| Oppose | 50 |
| DK     | 10 |

Most public school teachers have tenure; that is, after a two- or three-year period, they receive what amounts to a lifetime contract. Do you approve or disapprove of this policy? (1972, 1974, 1981)

|            |      |      |      |
|------------|------|------|------|
|            | 1972 | 1974 | 1981 |
|            | %    | %    | %    |
| Approve    | 28   | 31   | 28   |
| Disapprove | 61   | 56   | 63   |
| DK         | 11   | 13   | 9    |

If teachers must be laid off to save money in a school system, do you believe that those who are to be kept should be chosen on the basis of performance or on the basis of seniority? (1981)

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
|             | %  |
| Performance | 78 |
| Seniority   | 17 |
| DK          | 5  |

## Teacher Pay

Do you think salaries in this community for teachers are too high, too low, or just about right? (1969, 1981, 1983)

|             |      |      |      |
|-------------|------|------|------|
|             | 1969 | 1981 | 1983 |
|             | %    | %    | %    |
| Too high    | 2    | 10   | 8    |
| Too low     | 33   | 29   | 35   |
| About right | 43   | 41   | 31   |
| DK          | 22   | 20   | 26   |

|                            |      |      |      |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|
| (With DK group eliminated) | 1969 | 1981 | 1983 |
|                            | %    | %    | %    |
| Too high                   | 3    | 13   | 11   |
| Too low                    | 42   | 36   | 47   |
| About right                | 55   | 51   | 42   |

Are teachers in this community paid more money, or less money, than teachers in other comparable communities? (1969)

|      |    |
|------|----|
|      | %  |
| More | 12 |
| Less | 17 |
| Same | 34 |
| DK   | 37 |

Should each teacher be paid on the basis of the quality of his work or should all teachers be paid on a standard scale basis? (1970, 1983)

|                 | 1970 | 1983 |
|-----------------|------|------|
|                 | %    | %    |
| Quality of work | 58   | 61   |
| Standard scale  | 36   | 31   |
| DK              | 6    | 8    |

Do you think teachers should be given automatic raises, or should raises be given to some and not to others? (1969)

|               | %  |
|---------------|----|
| Automatic     | 44 |
| Not automatic | 45 |
| DK            | 11 |

Today there is a shortage of teachers in science, math, technical subjects, and vocational subjects. If your local public schools needed teachers in these subjects, would you favor or oppose paying them higher wages than teachers of other subjects? (1983)

|                                | %  |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Favor paying them higher wages | 30 |
| Oppose                         | 35 |
| DK                             | 15 |

From what you know, are teachers in your community pretty well satisfied with their pay and working conditions or are they dissatisfied? (1969)

|              | %  |
|--------------|----|
| Satisfied    | 35 |
| Dissatisfied | 35 |
| DK           | 30 |

## Teacher Organizations/Unions

How do you feel about teachers joining labor unions? Do you favor or oppose it? (1969)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 45 |
| Oppose | 40 |
| DK     | 15 |

Most teachers in the nation now belong to unions or associations that bargain over salaries, working conditions, and the like. Has unionization, in your opinion, helped, hurt, or made no difference in the quality of public school education in the U.S.? (1976, 1981)

|                    | 1976 | 1981 |
|--------------------|------|------|
|                    | %    | %    |
| Helped             | 22   | 18   |
| Hurt               | 38   | 37   |
| Made no difference | 27   | 33   |
| DK                 | 13   | 12   |

In schools where there are teacher unions, should those teachers who do not belong to the union be required to pay union dues, since they share the benefits of union bargaining? (1980) (Asked of the public and of teachers)

|          | Public | Teachers |
|----------|--------|----------|
|          | %      | %        |
| Yes, pay | 47     | 33       |
| No       | 44     | 64       |
| DK       | 9      | 3        |

Have teacher organizations gained too much power over their own salaries and working conditions? (1970)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 26 |
| No  | 53 |
| DK  | 21 |

Some teacher groups want to extend their bargaining powers beyond pay and working conditions. They would like to have the right to negotiate about class size, the curriculum, and teaching methods. Would you favor or oppose giving them these added rights? (1976)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 52 |
| Oppose | 39 |
| DK     | 9  |

## Teacher Strikes

Should public school teachers be permitted to strike or not? (1969, 1975, 1980, 1981)

|     |      |      |      |      |
|-----|------|------|------|------|
|     | 1969 | 1975 | 1980 | 1981 |
|     | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| Yes | 37   | 45   | 40   | 37   |
| No  | 59   | 48   | 52   | 56   |
| DK  | 4    | 7    | 8    | 7    |

In case an agreement can not be reached between a teachers union (or association) and the school board, would you favor or oppose a plan that would require the dispute to be settled by the decision of an arbitrator or panel acceptable to both the union and school board? (1975, 1982)

|        |      |      |
|--------|------|------|
|        | 1975 | 1982 |
|        | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 84   | 79   |
| Oppose | 7    | 7    |
| DK     | 9    | 14   |

## Burnout

Public school teachers are leaving the classroom in great numbers. Here are some reasons that are sometimes given. Which *three* of these do you think are the main reasons why teachers are leaving their jobs? (1982)

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
|                                                   | %  |
| Discipline problems in the schools                | 63 |
| Low teacher salaries                              | 52 |
| Students are unmotivated/uninterested in school   | 37 |
| Parents don't support teachers                    | 37 |
| Parents are not interested in children's progress | 25 |
| Lack of public financial support for education    | 24 |
| Low standing of teaching as a profession          | 15 |
| Difficulty of advancement                         | 14 |
| Outstanding teacher performance goes unrewarded   | 14 |
| DK                                                | 4  |

## Principals and Administrators

### Principals as Management

Should principals be considered a part of management? (1975)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 80 |
| No  | 11 |
| DK  | 9  |

The law may require hiring as many women school principals as men. Which would you personally prefer for this job — a man or a woman? (1975)

|               | %  |
|---------------|----|
| Prefer man    | 39 |
| Prefer woman  | 7  |
| No difference | 52 |
| DK            | 2  |

### Accountability

Should school administrators be tested every few years to see if they are keeping up-to-date? (1979)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 85 |
| No  | 10 |
| DK  | 5  |

How do you feel about having guidance counselors in the public schools? Do you think they are worth the added cost? (1970)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 73 |
| No  | 16 |
| DK  | 11 |

In your opinion, should or should not the public schools add personnel to help students and recent graduates get jobs? (1980)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 64 |
| No  | 30 |
| DK  | 6  |

## School Boards

### Influence of Groups on Local Education

In your opinion, is there any group of people in this community that has more influence than it should have in the way schools are run? (If yes, Who is that?) (1978)

|               | %  |
|---------------|----|
| Yes, too much | 20 |
| No            | 46 |
| DK            | 34 |

No one group was named by more than a small minority. Oddly enough, the local school board was often named, underscoring the finding of another survey that many persons are unaware of the function of local school boards.

Politicians received some mention, as did blacks and the NAACP, the PTA, and "the wealthy." But on the whole the public seemed to feel in 1978 that no outside group was excessively powerful in influencing the schools.

### Rating

Thinking about the school board in your school district, how much respect and confidence do you have in its ability to deal with school problems — a great deal of confidence, a fair amount, very little, or none? (1978)

|             | %  |
|-------------|----|
| Great deal  | 18 |
| Fair amount | 43 |
| Very little | 16 |
| None        | 6  |
| DK          | 17 |

How good a job do you think the school board does? (1969)

|                | %  |
|----------------|----|
| Excellent      | 25 |
| Above average  | 16 |
| Fair           | 21 |
| Poor, terrible | 7  |
| DK             | 31 |

Now a question about the local school board. Does it work hard to improve the quality of education? (1969, 1972) Does it see that schools function efficiently and at the lowest costs? (1969) Is it politically motivated? (1969)

|     | Work Hard |      | Schools Function Efficiently | Politically Motivated |
|-----|-----------|------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|     | 1969      | 1972 | 1969                         | 1969                  |
|     | %         | %    | %                            | %                     |
| Yes | 69        | 59   | 62                           | 44                    |
| No  | 11        | 19   | 15                           | 39                    |
| DK  | 20        | 22   | 23                           | 17                    |

## Support for Increased Power for School Board

Local school policies are set, not only by the local school board, but also by the state government and the federal government. In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility in running the schools, or less, than they do today? (1976)

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Greater responsibility | %  |
| Less responsibility    | 67 |
| About the same         | 15 |
| DK                     | 8  |

## Interested in Being a Member

If someone asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested? (1969)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 31 |
| No  | 67 |
| DK  | 2  |

Why do you say that? (1969)

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| <b>Those who say "yes"</b> | %  |
| Interested in helping      | 27 |
| Am qualified               | 4  |
| <b>Those who say "no"</b>  | %  |
| Not qualified              | 31 |
| Don't have time            | 15 |
| Not interested             | 9  |
| Have no children in school | 9  |
| Too much responsibility    | 6  |

## Changes Would Seek

If you were to become a school board member, what changes in the schools would you favor? (1969)

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
|                          | %  |
| Curriculum, courses,     |    |
| course content           | 15 |
| Professional staff       | 14 |
| Buildings and facilities | 11 |
| Better discipline        | 9  |
| Financial                | 4  |
| Transportation           | 3  |
| Segregation/integration  | 2  |
| Miscellaneous            | 2  |
| I'd make no changes      | 11 |
| DK                       | 44 |

# College

## Importance

How important is a college education today: ...very important, fairly important, or not too important? (1978, 1983) ...extremely important, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all? (1974) (In 1974 this question was asked only of high school juniors and seniors.)

|                  | 1974 | 1978 | 1983 |
|------------------|------|------|------|
|                  | %    | %    | %    |
| Very (extremely) | 34   | 36   | 58   |
| Fairly           | 51   | 46   | 31   |
| Not too          | 10   | 16   | 8    |
| Not at all       | 2    | -    | -    |
| DK               | 1    | 2    | 3    |

Would you like to have your eldest child go on to college after graduating from high school? Why? (1982) (asked of parents only)

|     | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|     | %                     | %                        |
| Yes | 87                    | 84                       |
| No  | 5                     | 6                        |
| DK  | 8                     | 10                       |

| Reasons Offered                                 | % * |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| More job opportunities/better income            | 48  |
| Need more education today to cope with problems | 27  |
| Have a better life                              | 20  |
| College allows more time to mature              | 4   |
| Miscellaneous                                   | 11  |

\*Total equals more than 100% because of multiple answers.

Do you think he/she *will* go to college? (1982)

|     | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|     | %                     | %                        |
| Yes | 57                    | 67                       |
| No  | 19                    | 15                       |
| DK  | 24                    | 18                       |

## Who Bears the Cost

Some people say that the federal government should pay all of the cost of a college education. Others believe that most of the costs should continue to be paid, as now, by parents and students. Which would you favor? (1969)

|                                         | %  |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Federal government pays                 | 16 |
| Parents and students pay                | 70 |
| Federal government and parents/students | 7  |
| Other methods                           | 4  |
| DK                                      | 3  |

## Loans

The federal government now makes available at low interest rates loans to students who attend college. The administration in Washington now thinks the loans should go to students from low-income families only. Should these loans be available to all students or only to students from low-income families? (1981)

|                                                  | %  |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| Limit loans to students from low-income families | 36 |
| Do not limit                                     | 59 |
| DK                                               | 5  |

## Youth Unemployment Jobs

In your opinion, should or should not the public schools add personnel to help students and recent graduates get jobs? (1980)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 64 |
| No  | 30 |
| DK  | 6  |

In your opinion, are the opportunities for young people to obtain part-time jobs in this community good, only fair, or poor? (1978)

|           | %  |
|-----------|----|
| Good      | 28 |
| Only fair | 39 |
| Poor      | 25 |
| DK        | 8  |

It has been suggested that the public schools be given the responsibility to set up special job training programs for young people, age 15 to 18, who are out of work and out of school. Would you favor or oppose such a plan? (1975)

|        | %  |
|--------|----|
| Favor  | 86 |
| Oppose | 11 |
| DK     | 3  |

As you may know, the United States has a youth unemployment problem. It has been suggested that we develop a national youth service which would require every young man under the age of 20 who is unemployed, and not attending school or college, to take vocational or on-the-job training, or to perform public or military service until he reaches the age of 20. Would you approve or disapprove of such a national youth service plan for young men? Would you approve or disapprove of such a national youth service plan for young women? (1979)

|            | Young Men | Young Women |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
|            | %         | %           |
| Approve    | 67        | 62          |
| Disapprove | 27        | 31          |
| DK         | 6         | 7           |

## Adult Education

Are you now taking, or have you ever taken, any courses in an adult education program? (1978, 1980)

|     | 1978 | 1980 |
|-----|------|------|
|     | %    | %    |
| Yes | 31   | 29   |
| No  | 68   | 70   |
| DK  | 1    | 1    |

Would you be interested next year in taking any special courses or training in any fields or in any subjects? (1978)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 41 |
| No  | 54 |
| DK  | 5  |

## Preschool

### Day-Care Centers

A proposal has been made to make child-care centers available for all preschool children as part of the public school system. This program would be supported by taxes. Would you favor or oppose such a program in your school district? (1976, 1981)

|        | 1976 | 1981 |
|--------|------|------|
|        | %    | %    |
| Favor  | 46   | 46   |
| Oppose | 49   | 47   |
| DK     | 5    | 7    |

Should the parents of preschool children participating in such a program be required to pay some of the costs for this day care? (1981)

|                    | %  |
|--------------------|----|
| Parents should pay | 83 |
| Parents should not | 10 |
| DK                 | 7  |

Do you think the school could help you in any way in preparing your child for school? (1979)

|                                                       | Yes<br>% | No<br>% | DK<br>% |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Parents who presently have no children in school      | 53       | 34      | 13      |
| Parents with one or more children in public school    | 37       | 53      | 10      |
| Parents with one or more children in parochial school | 40       | 40      | 20      |

## National Commission on Excellence in Education

Have you heard or read anything about the recent report of the President's National Commission on Excellence in Education? (1983)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 28 |
| No  | 68 |
| DK  | 4  |

In general, do you agree or disagree with the report's conclusions? (1983) (Asked of informed group only)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Agree    | 87 |
| Disagree | 8  |
| DK       | 5  |

The Commission concluded that the quality of education in the U.S. public schools is only fair and not improving. Do you agree with this opinion or disagree? (1983) (Asked of uninformed group only)

|          | %  |
|----------|----|
| Agree    | 74 |
| Disagree | 13 |
| DK       | 13 |

Would you be willing to pay more taxes to help raise the standard of education in the United States? (1983)

|     | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|     | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| Yes | 58              | 54                    | 70                    | 57                       |
| No  | 33              | 35                    | 24                    | 38                       |
| DK  | 9               | 11                    | 6                     | 5                        |

## Miscellaneous

Some girls get married before they are through high school. If they become pregnant, should they be permitted to attend? (1970)

|     | %  |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 46 |
| No  | 47 |
| DK  | 7  |

If high school students can meet academic requirements in three years instead of four, should they, or should they not, be permitted to graduate early? (1977)

|                     | %  |
|---------------------|----|
| Yes, they should    | 74 |
| No, they should not | 22 |
| DK                  | 4  |

Some children have such bad home conditions that they run away or are unable to function in the regular public school. Should live-in boarding schools be provided at public expense for these children? (1976)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 39 |
| No  | 50 |
| DK  | 11 |

Some students are not able to keep up with their classmates and therefore fail their work. Which of these two ways of dealing with this problem do you prefer? (1974)

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
|                     | %  |
| Promote them anyway | 7  |
| Hold them back      | 90 |
| DK                  | 3  |

Most people who have jobs today do not get home from work until 5:00 p.m. or later. In your opinion, should the schools arrange the afternoon school schedule so that children would get home at about the same time as their parents, or not? (1977)

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 33 |
| No  | 59 |
| DK  | 8  |

Which one [of listed school goals] do you think is most neglected by parents today? (1976)

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
|                                      | %  |
| High moral standards                 | 32 |
| Willingness to accept responsibility | 30 |
| Learning to think for oneself        | 14 |
| Ability to get along with others     | 8  |
| Eagerness to learn                   | 5  |
| Desire to excel                      | 4  |
| DK                                   | 7  |

And which one do you think is more neglected by schools? (1976)

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
|                                      | %  |
| High moral standards                 | 26 |
| Learning to think for oneself        | 15 |
| Eagerness to learn                   | 13 |
| Willingness to accept responsibility | 12 |
| Desire to excel                      | 9  |
| Ability to get along with others     | 8  |
| DK                                   | 17 |

Is this child at the top of his/her class, above average, average, or below average in his/her grades? (1974) (Asked of parents who responded for their eldest child.)

Where do you stand academically in your class — near the top, above average, or below average? (1974) (Asked of high school juniors and seniors.)

|               | Parents of<br>School Children | High School<br>Juniors & Seniors |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|               | %                             | %                                |
| Near top      | 20                            | 23                               |
| Above average | 34                            | 30                               |
| Average       | 40                            | 45                               |
| Below average | 4                             | 2                                |
| DK            | 2                             | -                                |

The number of one-parent families in the U.S. is growing each year due to the high divorce rate, and it is predicted that nearly half of the children born in 1980 will live, for a considerable period of time, with only one parent. Because of this, some people believe that the schools must find new ways to deal with the children from these broken homes. Of course, this will cost more money. Now, here are three proposals. For each one tell me whether you think it would be a good idea or a poor idea for the schools here. (1980)

|                                                                                                                                                        |           |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----|
| Proposal 1: Make school personnel available for evening counseling with single parents who are working if their children are having trouble at school. |           | %  |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Good idea | 86 |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Poor idea | 10 |
| Proposal 2: Give teachers training to help them deal with special problems of children from one-parent families.                                       | DK        | 4  |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Good idea | 83 |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Poor idea | 12 |
| Proposal 3: Provide activities so children can spend more time at school rather than going to an empty house.                                          | DK        | 5  |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Good idea | 76 |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Poor idea | 18 |
|                                                                                                                                                        | DK        | 6  |

Do the reports you receive on the progress of your [eldest] child in school provide you with the information you would like to have, or should the reports contain additional information that would be helpful? (1979)

|              | Public School<br>Parents | Parochial School<br>Parents |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
|              | %                        | %                           |
| Satisfied    | 62                       | 67                          |
| Dissatisfied | 32                       | 13                          |
| DK           | 6                        | 20                          |

Would you favor or oppose the idea of having your school board hire management experts to look into the costs of local schools to see if the educational goals could be achieved at less cost? (1971)

|        |    |
|--------|----|
|        | %  |
| Favor  | 54 |
| Oppose | 31 |
| DK     | 15 |

## Looking Ahead

As you look ahead to the year 2000 (that's 17 years from now), what do you think the schools will be doing then to education students? (1983)

Do you think that all students will have access to a computer and be trained in its use?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
|     | %  |
| Yes | 86 |
| No  | 6  |
| DK  | 8  |

|                                                                                        |     |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that more importance will be given to vocational training in high school? |     | %  |
|                                                                                        | Yes | 76 |
|                                                                                        | No  | 11 |
|                                                                                        | DK  | 13 |

|                                                                                   |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that more attention will be given to teaching students how to think? |     | %  |
|                                                                                   | Yes | 70 |
|                                                                                   | No  | 16 |
|                                                                                   | DK  | 14 |

|                                                                                                                             |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that what is now covered in the first two years of college will be covered before graduation from high school? |     | %  |
|                                                                                                                             | Yes | 65 |
|                                                                                                                             | No  | 19 |
|                                                                                                                             | DK  | 16 |

|                                                                           |     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that more attention will be given to individual instruction? |     | %  |
|                                                                           | Yes | 53 |
|                                                                           | No  | 32 |
|                                                                           | DK  | 15 |

|                                                                                       |     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think children will start school at an earlier age — such as 3 or 4 years old? |     | %  |
|                                                                                       | Yes | 51 |
|                                                                                       | No  | 37 |
|                                                                                       | DK  | 12 |

|                                                                                                                                   |     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that taxpayers will be willing to vote more favorably on bond issues and give more financial support to the schools? |     | %  |
|                                                                                                                                   | Yes | 45 |
|                                                                                                                                   | No  | 36 |
|                                                                                                                                   | DK  | 19 |

|                                                                                                      |     |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you think that the school program will cover 12 months of the year — with less time for holidays? |     | %  |
|                                                                                                      | Yes | 33 |
|                                                                                                      | No  | 53 |
|                                                                                                      | DK  | 14 |

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# 1984 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

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## Purpose of the Study

**T**HIS SURVEY, which measures the attitudes of Americans toward their public schools, is the 16th annual survey in this series. Funding for this survey was provided by Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Each year the poll attempts to deal with issues of greatest concern both to educators and to the public. New as well as trend questions are included in this and every survey.

To insure that the survey would embrace the most important issues in the field of education, Phi Delta Kappa organized a meeting of various leaders in the field of education to discuss their ideas, evaluate proposed questions, and suggest new questions for the survey.

We wish to thank all those who contributed their ideas to this survey.

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## Research Procedure

*The Sample.* The sample used in this survey embraced a total of 1,515 adults (18 years of age and older). It is described as a modified probability sample of the United States. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in all areas of the U.S. and in all types of communities. A description of the sample can be obtained from Phi Delta Kappa.

*Time of Interviewing.* The fieldwork for this study was carried out during the period of 18-27 May 1984.

*The Report.* In the tables that follow, the heading "Nonpublic School Parents" includes parents of students who attend parochial schools and parents of students who attend private or independent schools.

Due allowance must be made for statistical variation, especially in the case of findings for small groups in which relatively few respondents were interviewed, e.g., nonpublic school parents.

The findings of this report apply only to the U.S. as a whole and not to individual communities. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted to determine how local areas compare with national norms.

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## Summary of Findings

Americans are more favorably disposed toward the public schools today than at any time in the last decade. In this year's survey, more Americans (42%) grade their local schools A or B for their performance than at any time since 1976 — with an 11-point increase just since last year. Virtually the same dramatic increase occurs

among the parents of public school children — with a 10% rise since last year in the percentage giving the local schools an A or B rating.

Americans have also become significantly more favorably disposed toward public school teachers and administrators. In 1981, 39% gave teachers a grade of A or B, whereas today the figure is 50%. Moreover, the A or B grades given to principals and administrators have risen from 36% to 47% during this same three-year period.

A final indicator that reveals an increase in favorable feelings toward the schools is the public's increased willingness to pay the price for public education. The percentage of Americans who say that they would be willing to pay more taxes for education has risen from 30% to 41%.

Americans continue to feel that public education contributes more to national strength than either industrial might or military power. More than eight in 10 say that developing the best educational system in the world will be "very important" in determining America's future strength, compared to 70% who favor developing the best industrial production system and only 45% who favor developing the strongest military force.

The American public is divided in its support for the various recommendations proposed in the recently published reports concerning U.S. education. The public strongly favors 1) increasing the amount of schoolwork and homework in both elementary and high school, 2) basing all grade promotions on examinations, and 3) employing nationally standardized tests for high school diplomas. Support for each of these proposals has increased in recent years.

Americans also support, by wide margins, the ideas of career ladders for teachers and state board teacher examinations in every subject. To a lesser degree, the public feels that salaries for teachers are too low; Americans support higher pay for teachers where shortages exist, including mathematics, science, technical subjects, vocational training, and other critical areas.

Americans give top priority to the traditional "basics" — math and English — as has been the case since these annual surveys were initiated; there is virtually unanimous agreement that these courses should be required of all high school students — both college-bound and non-college-bound. Several of the so-called "new basics" (i.e., science and computer science) are considered less important, though both have recorded gains since 1981, particularly computer science. Similarly, vocational training as a requirement for non-college-bound students has registered substantial gains. The issue of foreign language as a requirement

for college-bound students, however, has made little progress in recent years. The number of Americans who feel that extracurricular activities are very important to a young person's education has dropped from 45% in 1978 to 31% today.

The public appears to be unwilling to make some of the necessary sacrifices or commitments to help implement some of the recommendations of the school reform reports. Americans are opposed to extended school years or longer school days, which would provide the time for additional schooling. (Support for both ideas has increased somewhat in the last few years, however.) Furthermore, nonparents as well as parents oppose by a 2-1 margin the tougher college admission standards that are the logical extension of stricter standards at the elementary and high school levels.

Although teachers oppose merit pay as a means of rewarding outstanding teaching performance by a margin of roughly 2-1, the public (including parents and nonparents) favors the idea by about 3-1. Among the half of the population who are familiar with merit pay, support rises to roughly 4-1.

Approximately seven Americans in 10 favor school prayer — one of the most controversial issues facing the public schools today. At the same time, though the survey question omitted the word *voluntary*, a separate Gallup Poll measuring support for *voluntary* prayer shows some decline in support for the proposal.

Although Americans have tended to favor Ronald Reagan as President over Walter Mondale, they feel that Mondale would be more likely than Reagan — by 42% to 34% — to improve the quality of education. In addition, 66% of Americans say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who favored increased federal spending for education; only 22% say that they would be less likely to vote for such a candidate.

The American public continues to regard discipline as the most important problem facing the public schools; about one-fourth of Americans cite discipline as the predominant problem, as they have done for more than a decade. Our analysis indicates that this is probably an outcome of the public's exaggerated perceptions of specific disciplinary problems that occur in the schools — especially when these findings are compared to the testimony of those most likely to know the actual situation, the teachers. Half of the American public feels that drugs are used in the local schools "most of the time" or "fairly often." About one-third of the public feels that theft of money or personal property, drinking of alcoholic beverages, theft of school property, and carrying of knives or other weapons occur "most of the time" or "fairly often."

## MONITORING MEASURES

### Education in America's Future

The American public is strongly in favor of developing the best educational system in the world. In fact, U.S. citizens believe — as they did in 1982, when this question was first asked — that education will be more important in determining America's place in the world 25 years from now than our industrial system or our military might.

The question:

In determining America's strength in the future — say, 25 years from now — how important do you feel each of the following factors will be — very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

|                                                                         | Very Important % | Fairly Important % | Not Too Important % | Not At All Important % | Don't Know % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Developing the best educational system in the world                     | 82               | 15                 | 2                   | 1                      | 2            |
| Developing the most efficient industrial production system in the world | 70               | 23                 | 3                   | 1                      | 3            |
| Building the strongest military force in the world                      | 45               | 36                 | 13                  | 3                      | 3            |
| Those responding very important                                         |                  |                    |                     |                        |              |
|                                                                         | 1984 %           |                    |                     | 1982 %                 |              |
| Developing the best educational system in the world                     | 82               |                    |                     | 84                     |              |
| Developing the most efficient industrial production system in the world | 70               |                    |                     | 66                     |              |
| Building the strongest military force in the world                      | 45               |                    |                     | 47                     |              |

### 1984 Rating of the Public Schools

The downward trend in the public's rating of the public schools recorded in these surveys during the last decade has ended. This year, 42% of those interviewed gave an A or B rating to the public schools in their communities, up sharply from 31% in 1983. Not since 1976 have these ratings been so high.

The higher rating given the schools this year may have resulted from two developments. First, the reports of the national commissions that have examined schooling in America have caused widespread debate concerning the quality of public education. Citizens have taken a closer look at their own schools and presumably found them better than they had previously believed. Also, many schools have heeded the criticisms made in the reports and have instituted reforms in their educational programs.

It is noteworthy that parents also give their schools a higher rating this year: 52% A or B, as opposed to 42% in 1983.

The question:

Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here — A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

|            | National Totals % | No Children in School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| A rating   | 10                | 8                       | 15                      | 4                          |
| B rating   | 32                | 31                      | 37                      | 33                         |
| C rating   | 35                | 35                      | 32                      | 42                         |
| D rating   | 11                | 10                      | 12                      | 16                         |
| FAIL       | 4                 | 5                       | 3                       | 4                          |
| Don't know | 8                 | 11                      | 1                       | 1                          |

| Ratings Given<br>The Local<br>Public Schools | National Totals |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |   |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
|                                              | 1984            | 1983 | 1982 | 1981 | 1980 | 1979 | 1978 | 1977 | 1976 |   |
| A rating                                     | 10              | 6    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 8    | 9    | 11   | 13   | % |
| B rating                                     | 32              | 25   | 29   | 27   | 25   | 26   | 27   | 26   | 29   | % |
| C rating                                     | 35              | 32   | 33   | 34   | 29   | 30   | 30   | 28   | 28   | % |
| D rating                                     | 1               | 13   | 14   | 13   | 12   | 11   | 11   | 11   | 10   | % |
| FAIL                                         | 4               | 7    | 5    | 7    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 5    | 6    | % |
| Don't know                                   | 8               | 17   | 11   | 10   | 18   | 15   | 15   | 19   | 14   | % |

Further breakdowns:

|                       | A  | B  | C  | D  | FAIL | Don't Know |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------|------------|
| NATIONAL TOTALS       | 10 | 32 | 35 | 11 | 4    | 8          |
| <b>Sex</b>            |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| Men                   | 9  | 33 | 34 | 11 | 5    | 8          |
| Women                 | 10 | 32 | 36 | 11 | 3    | 8          |
| <b>Race</b>           |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| White                 | 10 | 33 | 34 | 11 | 4    | 8          |
| Nonwhite              | 11 | 26 | 38 | 10 | 6    | 9          |
| <b>Age</b>            |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| 18 - 29 years         | 7  | 27 | 43 | 13 | 5    | 5          |
| 30 - 49 years         | 10 | 33 | 37 | 11 | 4    | 5          |
| 50 and over           | 11 | 35 | 27 | 9  | 5    | 13         |
| <b>Community Size</b> |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| 1 million and over    | 9  | 29 | 37 | 12 | 5    | 8          |
| 500,000 - 999,999     | 5  | 34 | 37 | 16 | 3    | 5          |
| 50,000 - 499,999      | 9  | 29 | 34 | 14 | 6    | 8          |
| 2,500 - 49,999        | 8  | 43 | 31 | 6  | 3    | 9          |
| Under 2,500           | 13 | 34 | 31 | 7  | 5    | 10         |
| Central city          | 6  | 27 | 38 | 15 | 7    | 7          |
| <b>Education</b>      |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| Grade school          | 14 | 27 | 29 | 8  | 5    | 17         |
| High school           | 6  | 33 | 35 | 12 | 5    | 7          |
| College               | 10 | 33 | 36 | 12 | 3    | 6          |
| <b>Region</b>         |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| East                  | 9  | 30 | 37 | 13 | 5    | 6          |
| Midwest               | 13 | 37 | 30 | 9  | 4    | 8          |
| South                 | 8  | 35 | 33 | 10 | 5    | 9          |
| West                  | 9  | 25 | 40 | 14 | 4    | 8          |

## Rating of Public Schools Nationally

This year's survey also shows an upward trend in the public's rating of the public schools nationally. But, as the ratings indicate, respondents continue to give schools in their own communities higher marks than they do the public schools nationally.

The question:

How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally — A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

|            | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|            | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| A rating   | 2               | 2                     | 3                     | 4                        |
| B rating   | 23              | 24                    | 21                    | 19                       |
| C rating   | 49              | 47                    | 52                    | 52                       |
| D rating   | 11              | 10                    | 13                    | 15                       |
| FAIL       | 4               | 4                     | 2                     | 4                        |
| Don't know | 11              | 13                    | 9                     | 6                        |

### Public Schools in the Nation

|            | 1984 | 1983 | 1982 | 1981 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
|            | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| A rating   | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| B rating   | 23   | 17   | 20   | 18   |
| C rating   | 49   | 38   | 44   | 43   |
| D rating   | 11   | 16   | 15   | 15   |
| FAIL       | 4    | 6    | 4    | 6    |
| Don't know | 11   | 21   | 15   | 16   |

## Rating of Teachers in the Local Public Schools

The 1984 survey indicates that the public has increasing respect for the teachers in the local schools. Half of all respondents give teachers an A or B rating. This is considerably higher than the rating given to teachers in the 1981 survey.

The highest ratings go to teachers in small communities — those with a population under 2,500. The lowest ratings go to teachers in the central cities, where the teaching problems are greatest.

Respondents living in the Midwest give their teachers a slightly higher rating than do citizens living in other areas of the U.S.

The question:

Now, what grade would you give the teachers in the public schools in this community?

|                        | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                        | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| A rating               | 13              | 13                    | 15                    | 6                        |
| B rating               | 37              | 35                    | 43                    | 34                       |
| C rating               | 31              | 31                    | 29                    | 42                       |
| D rating               | 7               | 6                     | 8                     | 9                        |
| FAIL                   | 3               | 3                     | 3                     | 1                        |
| Don't know             | 9               | 12                    | 2                     | 8                        |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> |                 | 1984                  |                       | 1981                     |
|                        |                 | %                     |                       | %                        |
| A rating               |                 | 13                    |                       | 11                       |
| B rating               |                 | 37                    |                       | 28                       |
| C rating               |                 | 31                    |                       | 31                       |
| D rating               |                 | 7                     |                       | 9                        |
| FAIL                   |                 | 3                     |                       | 6                        |
| Don't know             |                 | 9                     |                       | 15                       |

Further breakdowns:

|                       | A  | B  | C  | D  | FAIL | Don't Know |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------|------------|
| NATIONAL TOTALS       | 13 | 37 | 31 | 7  | 3    | 9          |
| <b>Sex</b>            |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| Men                   | 12 | 38 | 31 | 7  | 3    | 9          |
| Women                 | 14 | 37 | 31 | 6  | 3    | 9          |
| <b>Race</b>           |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| White                 | 13 | 38 | 30 | 7  | 3    | 9          |
| Nonwhite              | 13 | 33 | 33 | 6  | 3    | 12         |
| <b>Age</b>            |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| 18 - 29 years         | 11 | 33 | 38 | 7  | 4    | 7          |
| 30 - 49 years         | 13 | 39 | 32 | 8  | 2    | 6          |
| 50 and over           | 15 | 39 | 24 | 6  | 2    | 14         |
| <b>Community Size</b> |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| 1 million and over    | 12 | 35 | 35 | 6  | 3    | 9          |
| 500,000 - 999,999     | 17 | 38 | 25 | 10 | 2    | 8          |
| 50,000 - 499,999      | 9  | 37 | 33 | 8  | 2    | 11         |
| 2,500 - 49,999        | 15 | 39 | 27 | 5  | 4    | 10         |
| Under 2,500           | 17 | 41 | 19 | 5  | 5    | 13         |
| Central city          | 9  | 34 | 36 | 9  | 3    | 9          |
| <b>Education</b>      |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| Grade school          | 13 | 36 | 21 | 7  | 4    | 19         |
| High school           | 13 | 34 | 34 | 7  | 4    | 8          |
| College               | 13 | 42 | 29 | 7  | 1    | 8          |
| <b>Region</b>         |    |    |    |    |      |            |
| East                  | 11 | 40 | 31 | 8  | 5    | 7          |
| Midwest               | 16 | 41 | 27 | 5  | 2    | 9          |
| South                 | 13 | 34 | 33 | 8  | 2    | 10         |
| West                  | 11 | 34 | 33 | 8  | 3    | 11         |

## Rating of Principals and Administrators In the Local Public Schools

The ratings given to school principals and other administrators are somewhat similar to those given to teachers. As in the case of teachers, the ratings in the 1984 survey are appreciably higher than those in the 1981 survey.

The question:

Now, what grade would you give the principals and administrators in the local public schools in this community?

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A rating   | 13                      | 12                            | 18                               | 5                                   |
| B rating   | 34                      | 32                            | 36                               | 42                                  |
| C rating   | 29                      | 30                            | 27                               | 27                                  |
| D rating   | 8                       | 7                             | 10                               | 13                                  |
| FAIL       | 5                       | 5                             | 5                                | 6                                   |
| Don't know | 11                      | 14                            | 4                                | 7                                   |

|                 | 1984<br>% | 1981<br>% |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| NATIONAL TOTALS |           |           |
| A rating        | 13        | 10        |
| B rating        | 34        | 26        |
| C rating        | 29        | 28        |
| D rating        | 8         | 12        |
| FAIL            | 5         | 9         |
| Don't know      | 11        | 15        |

## Rating of the School Board In This Community

This year's survey, for the first time, rates school boards on the same scale as that employed to rate the schools, teachers, administrators, and parents.

Understandably, those who have little contact with the public schools say that they do not know enough about their local school boards to assign a rating. Parents with children now enrolled in either public or nonpublic schools rate school boards only slightly lower than they rate the schools themselves. The highest rating is given by respondents who have children now enrolled in the public schools.

The question:

Now, what grade would you give the school board in this community?

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A rating   | 9                       | 9                             | 11                               | 5                                   |
| B rating   | 32                      | 31                            | 33                               | 33                                  |
| C rating   | 29                      | 27                            | 29                               | 39                                  |
| D rating   | 11                      | 10                            | 14                               | 14                                  |
| FAIL       | 6                       | 6                             | 8                                | 5                                   |
| Don't know | 13                      | 17                            | 5                                | 4                                   |

## Rating Given to Parents of Students In the Public Schools

Parents of children now attending the public schools are not too pleased with the way public school parents are bringing up their children. In fact, they

selves, collectively, lower marks for the way they are doing their job than they give teachers and school administrators.

Only 39% give parents a grade of A or B. This contrasts with a figure of 58% for teachers and 54% for principals and other school administrators.

Parents with children attending nonpublic schools give parents of public school students even lower grades. Only 29% give public school parents an A or B rating; 26% give them a D or FAIL rating.

The question:

Now, what grade would you give the parents of students in the local public schools for bringing up their children?

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A rating   | 7                       | 6                             | 9                                | 6                                   |
| B rating   | 26                      | 25                            | 30                               | 23                                  |
| C rating   | 36                      | 36                            | 35                               | 40                                  |
| D rating   | 16                      | 15                            | 19                               | 16                                  |
| FAIL       | 6                       | 6                             | 5                                | 10                                  |
| Don't know | 9                       | 12                            | 2                                | 5                                   |

|                 | 1984<br>% | 1981 <sup>*</sup><br>% |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------------|
| NATIONAL TOTALS |           |                        |
| A rating        | 7         | 5                      |
| B rating        | 26        | 24                     |
| C rating        | 36        | 36                     |
| D rating        | 16        | 16                     |
| FAIL            | 6         | 11                     |
| Don't know      | 9         | 8                      |

<sup>\*</sup>The wording of the question in the 1981 survey, was: "What grade would you give parents in this community for the job they are doing in raising their children to be self-disciplined and responsible young people — A,B,C,D, or FAIL?"

## Tax Increases to Support The Public Schools

Since the spring of 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented its report, a slight increase has been registered in the percentage of citizens who favor a tax increase in situations where the schools say that they need much more money.

The percentage of public school parents who favor such a tax increase has risen from 48% in 1983 to 54% today, while the percentage of those opposed has dropped from 45% to 38%.

Those respondents who have attended college are most in favor of tax increases. When sections of the U.S. are compared, residents of the western states are found to be most in favor of raising taxes to help the schools.

The question:

Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

|                        | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| For raise in taxes     | 41                      | 37                            | 54                               | 42                                  |
| Against raise in taxes | 47                      | 50                            | 38                               | 51                                  |
| Don't know             | 12                      | 13                            | 8                                | 7                                   |

# Financial Support of the Public Schools

|                        | Favor<br>Raising<br>Taxes<br>% | Opposed to<br>Raising<br>Taxes<br>% | Don't Know<br>% |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> |                                |                                     |                 |
| 1984 survey            | 41                             | 47                                  | 12              |
| 1983 survey            | 39                             | 52                                  | 9               |
| 1981 survey            | 30                             | 60                                  | 10              |
| 1972 survey            | 36                             | 56                                  | 8               |
| 1971 survey            | 40                             | 52                                  | 8               |
| 1970 survey            | 37                             | 56                                  | 7               |
| 1969 survey            | 45                             | 49                                  | 6               |

## CURRENT EDUCATION ISSUES

### Presidential Candidate Perceived to Support Education More

At the time interviewing was conducted for this survey, Ronald Reagan held a wide lead in a Presidential trial heat against Walter Mondale (54% to 39%).

Despite this apparent preference for President Reagan, when the public was asked which candidate, Reagan or Mondale, would be more likely to improve the quality of education in the U.S., Mondale was named by a larger percentage than the President — 42% to 34%. Nearly a quarter of the public registered no opinion.

The question:

**Which Presidential candidate do you feel would be more likely, as President, to improve the quality of public education in the U.S. — Ronald Reagan or Walter Mondale?**

|                | National Totals<br>% |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Walter Mondale | 42                   |
| Ronald Reagan  | 34                   |
| No opinion     | 24                   |

### Likelihood of Voting for Candidate Supporting Increased Spending for Education

Another measure of the public's willingness to spend more on education is elicited by a question asking whether respondents would be more likely to vote for a Presidential candidate who favored increased spending for education or less likely to vote for such a candidate.

Two-thirds of Americans (66%) would be more likely to vote for the candidate supporting increased spending. Only a third as many (22%) say that they would be less likely to vote for this candidate.

The question:

**Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who says he would increase federal spending for education?**

|             | National Totals<br>% |
|-------------|----------------------|
| More likely | 66                   |
| Less likely | 22                   |
| Don't know  | 12                   |

## Increasing the Length of The School Year

Public sentiment in favor of increasing the length of the school year by one month is growing. In the 1982 survey a total of 37% approved of this plan. In 1983 approval reached 40%, and in the present survey the comparable figure is 44%. However, 50% in this year's survey still oppose this plan.

Those who are most in favor of a longer school year are residents of the cities with populations over one million. Most opposed are people living in smaller cities and in towns of 2,500 and under.

Those who have attended college favor a longer school year by a margin of 51% to 45%. Residents of the western states also approve a longer school year by a margin of 59% to 35%.

The question:

**In some nations, students attend school as many as 240 days a year as compared to 180 days in the U.S. How do you feel about extending the public school year in this community by 30 days, making the school year about 210 days or 10 months long? Do you favor or oppose this idea?**

|                        | National Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Favor                  | 44                   | 44                            | 45                            | 46                                  |
| Oppose                 | 50                   | 49                            | 52                            | 46                                  |
| No opinion             | 6                    | 7                             | 3                             | 8                                   |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984<br/>%</b>    | <b>1983<br/>%</b>             | <b>1982<br/>%</b>             |                                     |
| Favor                  | 44                   | 40                            | 37                            |                                     |
| Oppose                 | 50                   | 49                            | 53                            |                                     |
| No opinion             | 6                    | 11                            | 10                            |                                     |

Further breakdowns:

|                        | Favor<br>% | Oppose<br>% | No Opinion<br>% |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>44</b>  | <b>50</b>   | <b>6</b>        |
| <b>Sex</b>             |            |             |                 |
| Men                    | 45         | 49          | 6               |
| Women                  | 42         | 51          | 7               |
| <b>Race</b>            |            |             |                 |
| White                  | 44         | 50          | 6               |
| Nonwhite               | 46         | 48          | 6               |
| <b>Age</b>             |            |             |                 |
| 18 - 29 years          | 38         | 58          | 4               |
| 30 - 49 years          | 47         | 48          | 5               |
| 50 and over            | 45         | 46          | 9               |
| <b>Community Size</b>  |            |             |                 |
| 1 million and over     | 52         | 42          | 6               |
| 500,000 - 999,999      | 48         | 49          | 3               |
| 50,000 - 499,999       | 42         | 50          | 8               |
| 2,500 - 49,999         | 39         | 56          | 5               |
| Under 2,500            | 41         | 54          | 5               |
| Central city           | 52         | 42          | 6               |
| <b>Education</b>       |            |             |                 |
| Grade school           | 34         | 53          | 13              |
| High school            | 41         | 53          | 6               |
| College                | 51         | 45          | 4               |
| <b>Region</b>          |            |             |                 |
| East                   | 45         | 49          | 6               |
| Midwest                | 37         | 55          | 8               |
| South                  | 39         | 55          | 6               |
| West                   | 59         | 35          | 6               |

## Extending the School Day by One Hour

Although this year's survey findings indicate that the public is slightly more in favor of increasing the length of the school day by one hour than in 1982, a majority remain opposed.

Residents of the western states and the largest cities most strongly favor the longer school day. Residents of the Midwest are the most opposed.

The question:

**How do you feel about extending the school day in the schools in this community by one hour? Do you favor or oppose this idea?**

|                        | National Totals % | No Children In School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Favor                  | 42                | 42                      | 41                      | 38                         |
| Oppose                 | 52                | 51                      | 56                      | 58                         |
| No opinion             | 6                 | 7                       | 3                       | 4                          |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984 %</b>     | <b>1983 %</b>           | <b>1982 %</b>           |                            |
| Favor                  | 42                | 41                      | 37                      |                            |
| Oppose                 | 52                | 48                      | 55                      |                            |
| No opinion             | 6                 | 11                      | 8                       |                            |

Further breakdowns:

|                        | Favor %   | Oppose %  | No Opinion % |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>6</b>     |
| <b>Sex</b>             |           |           |              |
| Men                    | 42        | 52        | 6            |
| Women                  | 41        | 53        | 6            |
| <b>Race</b>            |           |           |              |
| White                  | 42        | 53        | 5            |
| Nonwhite               | 40        | 52        | 8            |
| <b>Age</b>             |           |           |              |
| 18 - 29 years          | 32        | 65        | 3            |
| 30 - 49 years          | 43        | 52        | 5            |
| 50 and over            | 48        | 44        | 8            |
| <b>Community Size</b>  |           |           |              |
| 1 million and over     | 49        | 45        | 6            |
| 500,000 - 999,999      | 34        | 59        | 7            |
| 50,000 - 499,999       | 37        | 57        | 6            |
| 2,500 - 49,999         | 39        | 55        | 6            |
| Under 2,500            | 46        | 48        | 6            |
| Central city           | 45        | 48        | 7            |
| <b>Education</b>       |           |           |              |
| Grade school           | 42        | 44        | 14           |
| High school            | 40        | 55        | 5            |
| College                | 45        | 51        | 4            |
| <b>Region</b>          |           |           |              |
| East                   | 46        | 49        | 5            |
| Midwest                | 34        | 60        | 6            |
| South                  | 37        | 57        | 6            |
| West                   | 53        | 42        | 5            |

## Amount of Schoolwork Required of Elementary and High School Students

All segments of the U.S. population agree that students in elementary schools and high schools are not made to work hard enough in school or on homework. This opinion has remained fairly constant in three surveys, the first in 1975.

Only 5% of those interviewed in this year's survey think that students are made to work too hard in elemen-

tary school, and only 4% think students in high school are made to work too hard. By contrast, 59% say that students are not required to work hard enough in elementary school, and 67% say that they are not required to work hard enough in high school.

Perhaps the best judges of whether students are being given enough schoolwork to do in school and at home are the parents of these students. Parents agree that their children are not being required to work hard enough. Only 7% of parents with children now enrolled in the public schools say that children in elementary school are required to work too hard; 54% say that they are not required to work hard enough. In the case of high school students, 5% of parents with children enrolled in public schools say that children are required to work too hard; 62% say that they are not required to work hard enough.

The question:

**In general, do you think elementary schoolchildren in the public schools here are made to work too hard in school and on homework or not hard enough?**

|                        | National Totals % | No Children In School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Too hard               | 5                 | 5                       | 7                       | 4                          |
| Not hard enough        | 59                | 60                      | 54                      | 56                         |
| About right amount     | 24                | 20                      | 24                      | 30                         |
| Don't know             | 12                | 15                      | 5                       | 10                         |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984 %</b>     | <b>1983 %</b>           | <b>1975 %</b>           |                            |
| Too hard               | 5                 | 4                       | 5                       |                            |
| Not hard enough        | 59                | 61                      | 49                      |                            |
| About right amount     | 24                | 19                      | 28                      |                            |
| Don't know             | 12                | 16                      | 18                      |                            |

The question:

**What about students in the public high schools here — in general, are they required to work too hard or not hard enough?**

|                        | National Totals % | No Children In School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Too hard               | 4                 | 4                       | 5                       | -                          |
| Not hard enough        | 67                | 69                      | 62                      | 69                         |
| About right amount     | 18                | 15                      | 25                      | 22                         |
| Don't know             | 11                | 12                      | 8                       | 9                          |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984 %</b>     | <b>1983 %</b>           | <b>1975 %</b>           |                            |
| Too hard               | 4                 | 3                       | 3                       |                            |
| Not hard enough        | 67                | 65                      | 54                      |                            |
| About right amount     | 18                | 12                      | 22                      |                            |
| Don't know             | 11                | 20                      | 21                      |                            |

## Subjects the Public Would Require

Mathematics and English head the list of subjects the public would require of high school students who plan to attend college; mathematics was mentioned by 96% of respondents, and English was mentioned by 94%.

In addition, a large majority would require history/U.S. government and science. Slightly fewer, but

still a majority, would require courses in business, foreign language, and health education.

For non-college-bound students, the public would also require math and English and by virtually the same percentages as for those planning to go to college. Somewhat fewer respondents feel that history and science should be required of non-college-bound students, and far fewer favor a foreign language requirement.

Not surprisingly, a much larger percentage of Americans feel that vocational training should be required for non-college-bound students than for those planning to go to college. Similarly, business as a required course is favored by a slightly larger percentage for non-college-bound students.

Support for computer science as a required course — for both college- and non-college-bound students — has dramatically increased from 43% to 68% in just three years. Although support for a science requirement for non-college-bound students has risen only marginally, support for a science requirement for those planning to go to college has risen from 76% to 84% since 1981. On the other hand, support for a foreign language for college-bound students has made little progress in the past three years.

The questions:

**Would you look over this card, which lists high school subjects. If you were the one to decide, what subjects would you require every public high school student who plans to go on to college to take?**

**What about those public high school students who do not plan to go to college when they graduate? Which courses would you require them to take?**

|                         | Should Be Required                  |                                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                         | For Those Planning To Go to College | For Those Not Planning to Go To College |
|                         | %                                   | %                                       |
| Mathematics             | 96                                  | 92                                      |
| English                 | 94                                  | 90                                      |
| History/U.S. government | 84                                  | 71                                      |
| Science                 | 84                                  | 61                                      |
| Business                | 68                                  | 76                                      |
| Foreign language        | 57                                  | 19                                      |
| Health education        | 52                                  | 50                                      |
| Physical education      | 43                                  | 44                                      |
| Vocational training     | 37                                  | 83                                      |
| Art                     | 24                                  | 18                                      |
| Music                   | 22                                  | 18                                      |

|                         | Should Be Required                  |      |      |                                         |      |      |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------------------------|------|------|
|                         | For Those Planning To Go to College |      |      | For Those Not Planning to Go To College |      |      |
|                         | 1984                                | 1983 | 1981 | 1984                                    | 1983 | 1981 |
|                         | %                                   | %    | %    | %                                       | %    | %    |
| Mathematics             | 96                                  | 92   | 94   | 92                                      | 87   | 91   |
| English                 | 94                                  | 88   | 91   | 90                                      | 83   | 89   |
| History/U.S. government | 84                                  | 78   | 83   | 71                                      | 63   | 71   |
| Science                 | 84                                  | 76   | 76   | 61                                      | 53   | 58   |
| Business                | 68                                  | 55   | 60   | 76                                      | 65   | 75   |
| Foreign language        | 57                                  | 50   | 54   | 19                                      | 19   | 21   |
| Health education        | 52                                  | 43   | 47   | 50                                      | 42   | 46   |
| Physical education      | 43                                  | 41   | 44   | 44                                      | 40   | 43   |
| Vocational training     | 37                                  | 32   | 34   | 83                                      | 74   | 64   |
| Art                     | 24                                  | 19   | 28   | 18                                      | 16   | 20   |
| Music                   | 22                                  | 18   | 26   | 18                                      | 16   | 20   |

## Special Areas of Instruction That Should Be Required

The public would like the public schools to provide instruction in many aspects of modern life, in addition to the subjects traditionally included in the school curriculum. Heading the list of these special areas of instruction is drug abuse, followed by alcohol abuse. Large majorities of the population would also require instruction in such areas as driver education, computer training, race relations, and the dangers of nuclear waste.

The question:

**In addition to regular courses, high schools offer instruction in other areas. As I read off these areas, one at a time, would you tell me whether you feel this instruction should be required or should not be required for all high school students.**

|                           | Should Be Required % | Should Not Be Required % | No Opinion % |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Drug abuse                | 82                   | 15                       | 3            |
| Alcohol abuse             | 79                   | 18                       | 3            |
| Driver education          | 73                   | 25                       | 2            |
| Computer training         | 68                   | 28                       | 4            |
| Race relations            | 65                   | 29                       | 6            |
| Dangers of nuclear waste  | 61                   | 34                       | 5            |
| Communism/socialism       | 57                   | 37                       | 6            |
| Parenting/parent training | 55                   | 39                       | 6            |
| Dangers of nuclear war    | 51                   | 43                       | 6            |

|                           | Should Be Required |        |        |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
|                           | 1984 %             | 1983 % | 1981 % |
| Drug abuse                | 82                 | 81     | 82     |
| Alcohol abuse             | 78                 | 76     | 78     |
| Driver education          | 73                 | 72     | 71     |
| Computer training         | 68                 | 72     | 43     |
| Race relations*           | 65                 | 56     | -      |
| Dangers of nuclear waste* | 61                 | 56     | -      |
| Communism/socialism*      | 57                 | 51     | -      |
| Parenting/parent training | 55                 | 58     | 64     |
| Dangers of nuclear war*   | 51                 | 46     | -      |

\*These topics were not included in the 1981 survey.

## Importance of Extracurricular Activities

About three-quarters of the U.S. public (77%) feel that extracurricular activities are either "very important" or "fairly important" to a young person's education. At the same time, however, there has been a decline in the percentage of those who say that extracurricular activities are "very important" — from 45% in 1978 to 31% in 1984. During this same period there has been an increase in the percentage of the public who say that extracurricular activities are "not too important" — from 9% to 18%. This decrease in support may reflect, to some extent, the heavy emphasis placed on the academic curriculum by the various national reports on the state of education.

Better-educated Americans are more inclined to feel that extracurricular activities are important. A total of 84% of those who have attended college say that these activities are "very important" or "fairly important," while only 68% of those whose education ended with

grade school regard such activities as important.  
The question:

**I'd like your opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, and the school paper. How important are these to a young person's education — very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?**

|                        | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Very important         | 31                      | 31                            | 32                               | 30                                  |
| Fairly important       | 46                      | 45                            | 48                               | 52                                  |
| Not too important      | 18                      | 18                            | 16                               | 14                                  |
| Not at all important   | 4                       | 4                             | 3                                | 3                                   |
| No opinion             | 1                       | 2                             | 1                                | 1                                   |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> |                         | <b>1984</b>                   | <b>1978</b>                      |                                     |
| Very important         |                         | 31                            | 45                               |                                     |
| Fairly important       |                         | 46                            | 40                               |                                     |
| Not too important      |                         | 18                            | 9                                |                                     |
| Not at all important   |                         | 4                             | 4                                |                                     |
| No opinion             |                         | 1                             | 2                                |                                     |

### National Test for Graduation

The American public shows remarkable unanimity in favoring a standard nationwide test for graduation from high school. Only in communities under 2,500 is sentiment fairly closely divided on this proposal.

This question was first asked of a national cross section of adults in 1958, and the idea was favored at that time by a margin of 50% to 39%. When the same question was asked in 1981, 69% favored the proposal, 26% opposed it, and 5% had no opinion. Roughly the same results were found in this year's survey: 65% in favor, 29% opposed, and 6% with no opinion.

Many nations require students to pass standard examinations for graduation; in the United States, however, because of varying local conditions, such a plan has never been adopted. Nevertheless, the public appears to see merit in such a policy.

The question:

**Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?**

|                        | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes                    | 65                      | 65                            | 65                               | 59                                  |
| No                     | 29                      | 29                            | 29                               | 35                                  |
| No opinion             | 6                       | 6                             | 6                                | 6                                   |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> |                         | <b>1984</b>                   | <b>1981</b>                      | <b>1978</b>                         |
| Yes                    |                         | 65                            | 69                               | 50                                  |
| No                     |                         | 29                            | 26                               | 39                                  |
| No opinion             |                         | 6                             | 5                                | 11                                  |

### Raising College Entrance Requirements

Many educators have argued that raising the entrance requirements of colleges and universities would be an effective way of inducing the public schools to

raise their standards. However, this proposal fails to win the approval of the public.

Analysis of the opinions of various groups in the population reveals that all major groups oppose this suggestion, especially those most concerned: parents of children now attending elementary or high school. Even those who have attended college vote against the idea.

The question:

**Do you feel that four-year colleges and universities should raise their entrance requirements or not?**

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes        | 27                      | 28                            | 24                               | 21                                  |
| No         | 59                      | 57                            | 64                               | 61                                  |
| No opinion | 14                      | 15                            | 12                               | 18                                  |

### State Board Examinations for Teachers

Survey findings reveal widespread agreement that prospective teachers should be required to pass state board examinations to prove their knowledge in the subjects they plan to teach.

More than eight in every 10 respondents have favored this policy in the three surveys in which this same question has been asked: 1979, 1981, and 1984.

The question:

**In addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate, should those who want to become teachers also be required to pass a state board examination to prove their knowledge in the subjects they will teach before they are hired?**

|                        | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes                    | 89                      | 89                            | 89                               | 92                                  |
| No                     | 7                       | 7                             | 8                                | 7                                   |
| No opinion             | 4                       | 4                             | 3                                | 1                                   |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> |                         | <b>1984</b>                   | <b>1981</b>                      | <b>1979</b>                         |
| Yes                    |                         | 89                            | 84                               | 85                                  |
| No                     |                         | 7                             | 11                               | 9                                   |
| No opinion             |                         | 4                             | 5                                | 6                                   |

### Career Ladder for Teachers

The proposal to adopt a career ladder for public school teachers that is grounded in classroom effectiveness, with accompanying salary increases, is favored by a substantial majority (75%) of the public. In fact, by approximately the same percentages, all segments of the population agree that this is a good plan.

The question:

**It has been suggested that public schools adopt a career ladder for teachers, based primarily upon demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom, with salaries increasing accordingly. Would you approve or disapprove if such a plan were adopted by the public schools in this community?**

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Approve    | 75                      | 74                            | 77                               | 79                                  |
| Disapprove | 16                      | 16                            | 16                               | 16                                  |
| No opinion | 9                       | 10                            | 7                                | 5                                   |

### Teachers' Salaries in This Community

The American public tends to feel that teachers' salaries are too low. Interestingly, this view is held by those who do not have children enrolled in the public schools, as well as by those who do.

On the other hand, those who have no children in the local schools are more likely to vote against tax increases and bond issues for the schools than those who have children enrolled.

During the last 15 years, attitudes concerning teachers' salaries have shown little change. The weight of opinion throughout this period has been that salaries are too low. This opinion is particularly prevalent among more highly educated citizens and among those who live in the southern states, where teacher salaries tend to be lowest.

The question:

Do you think salaries in this community for teachers are too high, too low, or just about right?

|                                                                     | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Too high                                                            | 7                       | 6                             | 8                                | 7                                   |
| Too low                                                             | 37                      | 37                            | 38                               | 33                                  |
| Just about right                                                    | 41                      | 40                            | 41                               | 47                                  |
| No opinion                                                          | 15                      | 17                            | 13                               | 13                                  |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b>                                              | <b>1984</b>             | <b>1983</b>                   | <b>1981</b>                      | <b>1980</b>                         |
| Too high                                                            | 7                       | 8                             | 10                               | 2                                   |
| Too low                                                             | 37                      | 35                            | 29                               | 33                                  |
| About right                                                         | 41                      | 31                            | 41                               | 43                                  |
| No opinion                                                          | 15                      | 26                            | 20                               | 22                                  |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS<br/>(with "no opinion"<br/>group eliminated)</b> | <b>1984</b>             | <b>1983</b>                   | <b>1981</b>                      | <b>1980</b>                         |
| Too high                                                            | 8                       | 11                            | 13                               | 3                                   |
| Too low                                                             | 44                      | 47                            | 36                               | 42                                  |
| About right                                                         | 48                      | 42                            | 51                               | 55                                  |

### Paying Math and Science Teachers More

Slightly more respondents in this year's survey favor than oppose paying higher wages to teachers of science, math, and technical and vocational subjects because of the shortage that now exists in these subject areas. However, only in the largest cities does the percentage reach 50% or higher.

When the same question was asked in 1983, national totals were 50% in favor, 35% opposed, and 15% don't know.

The question:

Today there is a shortage of teachers in science, math, technical subjects, and vocational subjects. If your local schools needed teachers in these subjects, would you favor or oppose paying them higher wages than teachers of other subjects?

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Favor      | 48                      | 48                            | 52                               | 56                                  |
| Oppose     | 43                      | 43                            | 42                               | 37                                  |
| No opinion | 9                       | 11                            | 6                                | 7                                   |

| NATIONAL TOTALS | 1984<br>% | 1981<br>% |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Favor           | 48        | 50        |
| Oppose          | 43        | 35        |
| No opinion      | 9         | 15        |

### Attitudes Toward Merit Pay Programs

Although the issue of merit pay for teachers seems to have provoked a great deal of discussion recently, when this survey was conducted only half of those interviewed said that they had heard or read anything about such programs.

When those who said that they were aware of merit pay proposals were asked whether they generally favored or opposed the idea, three-fourths (76%) said that they approved of it, 19% were opposed, and 5% had no opinion. For the total sample, the percentage who approve of the idea of merit pay is 65%, with 22% opposed and 13% having no opinion.

In 1970 and again in 1983 a merit pay question was asked in this form: "Should each teacher be paid on the basis of the quality of his or her work, or should all teachers be paid on a standard-scale basis?" In 1970, 58% said that teachers should be paid according to "quality of work," 36% on a "standard scale," and 6% said "don't know." Comparable figures for 1983 were 61%, 31%, and 8%.

The question:

Some states have recently adopted merit pay programs which would provide additional pay for outstanding teacher performance. Have you heard or read anything about these programs?

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes        | 51                      | 50                            | 55                               | 56                                  |
| No         | 45                      | 46                            | 42                               | 42                                  |
| Don't know | 4                       | 4                             | 3                                | 2                                   |

The question:

How do you, yourself, feel about the idea of merit pay for teachers? In general, do you favor or oppose it?

|                                                                          | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Total Sample</b>                                                      |                         |                               |                                  |                                     |
| Favor                                                                    | 65                      | 63                            | 69                               | 75                                  |
| Oppose                                                                   | 22                      | 23                            | 20                               | 14                                  |
| No opinion                                                               | 13                      | 14                            | 11                               | 11                                  |
| <b>Those Who Have<br/>Heard or Read About<br/>Merit Pay for Teachers</b> |                         |                               |                                  |                                     |
| Favor                                                                    | 76                      | 75                            | 77                               | 91                                  |
| Oppose                                                                   | 19                      | 20                            | 19                               | 10                                  |
| No opinion                                                               | 5                       | 5                             | 4                                | 9                                   |

## Criteria to Be Used in Awarding Merit Pay

One of the greatest hurdles facing merit pay is the difficulty of agreeing on the criteria to be used in deciding which teachers should receive extra pay. A list of possible criteria was compiled. To determine which criteria are most acceptable to the public, respondents were asked in the case of each criterion whether they thought it should or should not be used to decide which teachers should be given additional pay.

Seven criteria are listed below in order of their acceptability to the public. Improvement achieved by students as measured by standardized tests is rated highest. Virtually the same rating is given to the evaluations of administrators. Gaining almost the same high approval is an advanced degree, such as the master's or Ph.D. Evaluation by other teachers, length of teaching experience, students' evaluations, and parents' opinions have support, but not majority support.

The question:

**This card lists possible criteria for giving additional pay to teachers for special merit. As I read off each one by letter, please tell me if you think it should or should not be used to determine which teachers should receive merit pay.**

|                                                                                     | Should Be<br>Criterion<br>% | Should Not<br>Be Criterion<br>% | No<br>Opinion<br>% |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Academic achievement or improvement of students (as measured by standardized tests) | 68                          | 25                              | 7                  |
| Administrators' evaluations                                                         | 67                          | 26                              | 7                  |
| An advanced degree, such as a master's or Ph.D.                                     | 66                          | 27                              | 7                  |
| Evaluation by other teachers in the system                                          | 48                          | 42                              | 10                 |
| Length of teaching experience                                                       | 48                          | 47                              | 5                  |
| Students' evaluations                                                               | 45                          | 47                              | 8                  |
| Parents' opinions                                                                   | 36                          | 55                              | 9                  |

## Teaching as a Career

Although teaching as a career has lost favor steadily during the last 15 years, the results from this year's survey indicate that the downward trend may have ended. In 1969, 75% of parents said that they would like to see one of their children enter public school teaching as a career. In 1983 only 45% said this.

In the 1984 survey, the question differed from that asked in 1969 and 1983, which dealt with "a child of yours." The question this year asked respondents first if they would like a daughter to take up teaching as a career; the same question was then asked about a son.

Fully 50% of those interviewed said that they would like a daughter of theirs to take up teaching in the public schools as a career. Slightly fewer (46%) said that they would like a son of theirs to make a career of teaching.

The question:

**Would you like to have a daughter of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?**

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes        | 50                      | 49                            | 54                               | 46                                  |
| No         | 39                      | 40                            | 34                               | 35                                  |
| No opinion | 11                      | 11                            | 12                               | 19                                  |

The question:

**Would you like to have a son of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?**

|            | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes        | 46                      | 45                            | 51                               | 41                                  |
| No         | 42                      | 43                            | 37                               | 40                                  |
| No opinion | 12                      | 12                            | 12                               | 19                                  |

|                 | Daughter  |           | Son       |           |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                 | 1984<br>% | 1981<br>% | 1984<br>% | 1981<br>% |
| NATIONAL TOTALS |           |           |           |           |
| Yes             | 50        | 46        | 46        | 43        |
| No              | 39        | 44        | 42        | 47        |
| Don't know      | 11        | 10        | 12        | 10        |

## Prayer in the Public Schools

Prayer in the public schools is an issue that has been hotly debated in recent years. A majority of those interviewed in this year's survey favor a Constitutional amendment that would allow school prayer. However, the least support for such an amendment is found among the best-educated citizens and among the youngest adult age group — and these two groups will play the greatest role in determining future trends in public attitudes.

The question:

**Have you heard or read about a proposed Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow prayer in the public schools?**

|          | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Yes      | 93                      | 93                            | 95                               | 93                                  |
| No       | 6                       | 7                             | 4                                | 7                                   |
| Not sure | 1                       | -                             | 1                                | -                                   |

\*Less than one-half of 1%.

The question:

**Do you favor or oppose this proposed Amendment?**

|                          | National<br>Totals<br>% | No Children<br>In School<br>% | Public<br>School<br>Parents<br>% | Nonpublic<br>School<br>Parents<br>% |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Those Aware of Amendment |                         |                               |                                  |                                     |
| Favor                    | 69                      | 68                            | 73                               | 68                                  |
| Oppose                   | 24                      | 25                            | 21                               | 21                                  |
| Don't know               | 7                       | 7                             | 6                                | 11                                  |

The question:

**How strongly do you favor/oppose this Amendment — very strongly, fairly strongly, or not at all strongly?**

| Those Who Favor the Amendment | National Totals |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
|                               | %               |
| Very strongly                 | 61              |
| Fairly strongly               | 34              |
| Not at all strongly           | 5               |
| Can't say                     | *               |

| Those Who Oppose the Amendment | National Totals |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                | %               |
| Very strongly                  | 49              |
| Fairly strongly                | 38              |
| Not at all strongly            | 12              |
| Can't say                      | 1               |

\*Less than one-half of 1%.

## Nongraded Schools

The idea that a student should be allowed to progress through the school system at his or her own speed and without regard to grade level wins majority support, though acceptance of this plan by the public is less than in earlier surveys.

The nongraded concept is more popular with better-educated citizens, with younger citizens, and with parents of children in nonpublic schools. It is most popular in the large cities and least popular in the small communities of the U.S.

The question:

Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade level? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math, but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?

|                        | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                        | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| Favor                  | 54              | 51                    | 58                    | 63                       |
| Oppose                 | 39              | 40                    | 36                    | 33                       |
| No opinion             | 7               | 9                     | 6                     | 4                        |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984</b>     | <b>1980</b>           | <b>1975</b>           | <b>1972</b>              |
|                        | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| Favor                  | 54              | 62                    | 64                    | 71                       |
| Oppose                 | 39              | 30                    | 28                    | 22                       |
| No opinion             | 7               | 8                     | 8                     | 7                        |

## Course Credit for Community Service

Widespread approval is found for a proposal to award course credit to high school juniors and seniors for community service, such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers.

This proposal was first included in this survey series in 1978. At that time, 87% said that they would like such a plan to be adopted in their own community. In this year's survey, 79% approve of this plan. However, the approval rating among parents of children now attending the public schools remains about the same (86%) as in the earlier survey.

Every group in the population gives a high approval rating to this proposal, which was strongly endorsed in Ernest Boyer's 1983 report, *High School*, an important study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The question:

A plan has been suggested to enable all juniors and seniors in high school to perform some kind of community service for course credit — such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers. Would you like to have such a plan adopted in this community, or not?

|                        | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                        | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| Yes, would like plan   | 79              | 77                    | 86                    | 78                       |
| No, would not          | 16              | 17                    | 12                    | 16                       |
| No opinion             | 5               | 6                     | 2                     | 6                        |
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b> | <b>1984</b>     | <b>1978</b>           |                       |                          |
|                        | %               | %                     |                       |                          |
| Yes, would like plan   | 79              | 87                    |                       |                          |
| No, would not          | 16              | 8                     |                       |                          |
| No opinion             | 5               | 5                     |                       |                          |

## PERENNIAL ISSUES

### Major Problems Confronting the Public Schools in 1984

Although discipline continues to be cited most frequently by respondents as the top problem with which their local schools must contend, parents who now have children enrolled in the public schools mention this problem significantly less often than in 1983.

In the 1983 survey, 29% of the parents interviewed named "discipline" as the biggest problem of their schools; 23% mentioned discipline in this year's survey. Since parents of children now in school are likely to be best informed about discipline, their views must be given special credence.

The top five problems found in the 1983 study are also the top five problems cited in 1984. Next to discipline, "use of drugs" and "poor curriculum/standards" are mentioned most often. Tied for fourth place are "lack of proper financial support" and "difficulty getting good teachers."

The question:

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?

|                                  | National Totals | No Children In School | Public School Parents | Nonpublic School Parents |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                  | %               | %                     | %                     | %                        |
| Lack of discipline               | 27              | 28                    | 23                    | 36                       |
| Use of drugs                     | 18              | 18                    | 20                    | 10                       |
| Poor curriculum/poor standards   | 15              | 16                    | 14                    | 18                       |
| Lack of proper financial support | 14              | 12                    | 17                    | 13                       |
| Difficulty getting good teachers | 14              | 13                    | 15                    | 13                       |
| Integration/busing               | 6               | 7                     | 3                     | 4                        |
| Teachers' lack of interest       | 5               | 4                     | 6                     | 7                        |
| Parents' lack of interest        | 5               | 5                     | 6                     | 7                        |
| Low teacher salaries             | 4               | 3                     | 6                     | 5                        |
| Pupils' lack of interest/truancy | 4               | 4                     | 4                     | 4                        |

(Continued on next page)

|                                             |    |    |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------|----|----|---|---|
| Drinking/alcoholism                         | 4  | 3  | 5 | 5 |
| Large schools/over-crowding                 | 4  | 3  | 4 | 8 |
| Lack of respect for teachers/other students | 3  | 3  | 4 | 2 |
| Problems with administration                | 3  | 3  | 2 | 4 |
| Crime/vandalism                             | 3  | 3  | 2 | 2 |
| Mismanagement of funds                      | 2  | 1  | 2 | 5 |
| Lack of proper facilities                   | 2  | 2  | 1 | 1 |
| Moral standards                             | 1  | 1  | 2 | 2 |
| Teachers' strikes                           | 1  | 1  | 1 | 2 |
| Communication problems                      | 1  | 1  | 2 | 1 |
| Parental involvement with school activities | 1  | *  | 1 | 1 |
| Lack of needed teachers                     | 1  | 1  | 1 | - |
| Fighting                                    | 1  | *  | 2 | - |
| Government interference                     | 1  | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| There are no problems                       | 1  | 1  | 2 | 1 |
| Miscellaneous                               | 4  | 4  | 5 | 7 |
| Don't know/no answer                        | 10 | 12 | 4 | 5 |

(Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)  
 \*Less than one-half of 1%.

### The Public's Perceptions About Discipline

One way to measure attitudes regarding discipline is to ask respondents how serious a problem discipline is in their schools. Not surprisingly, those most closely connected with schools — the parents of students — hold different views from non-parents about discipline and about many other problems with which the local schools must deal. Thus 29% of parents with children enrolled in the public schools say that the discipline problem is "very serious." In answer to the same question, 36% of those who have no children in the public schools say that the discipline problem is "very serious."

The question:

How serious a problem would you say discipline is in the public schools in this community — very serious, fairly serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

|                    | National Totals % | No Children in School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Very serious       | 34                | 36                      | 29                      | 32                         |
| Fairly serious     | 34                | 34                      | 35                      | 38                         |
| Not too serious    | 22                | 18                      | 29                      | 25                         |
| Not at all serious | 4                 | 3                       | 6                       | 3                          |
| No opinion         | 6                 | 9                       | 1                       | 2                          |

One of the perennial problems facing the public schools concerns public relations. The media are prone to limit their coverage of news of the schools to what journalists describe as "spot" news — happenings or events that take place in the schools. Unfortunately, these stories usually concern vandalism, drugs, absenteeism, theft of school property, attacks on teachers, and the like. "Good news" is difficult to find and to report.

Consequently, the public receives a distorted picture of schools and tends to regard them as blackboard jungles. Evidence of this comes from a question that asked respondents to estimate how often certain disciplinary problems occur in their local schools.

Analysis reveals that the perception of schools as

blackboard jungles is likely to result from an exaggerated idea of the specific disciplinary problems that occur in a school system; this is certainly true when the perceptions of the public are compared with those of teachers, who are most likely to know the actual situation.

For example, as many of half of the respondents in this year's survey feel that drugs are used in their local schools "most of the time" or "fairly often." Similarly, about one-third of the public feel that theft of money or personal property, drinking of alcoholic beverages, theft of school property, and carrying of knives or other weapons occur "most of the time" or "fairly often."

The question:

As I read off the following problems by letter, would you tell me how often you think each problem occurs in the public schools in this community — just your impression?

|                                                                                     | Most of the Time or Fairly Often % | Not Very Often or Almost Never % | Don't Know % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>NATIONAL TOTALS</b>                                                              |                                    |                                  |              |
| Schoolwork and homework assignments not completed                                   | 64                                 | 23                               | 13           |
| Behavior that disrupts class                                                        | 60                                 | 29                               | 11           |
| Skippping classes                                                                   | 56                                 | 31                               | 13           |
| Talking back to/disobeying teachers                                                 | 56                                 | 32                               | 12           |
| Truancy/being absent from school                                                    | 53                                 | 36                               | 11           |
| Use of drugs at school                                                              | 53                                 | 33                               | 14           |
| Selling of drugs at school                                                          | 47                                 | 37                               | 16           |
| Sloppy or inappropriate dress                                                       | 47                                 | 42                               | 11           |
| Cheating on tests                                                                   | 46                                 | 38                               | 16           |
| Vandalizing of school property                                                      | 39                                 | 49                               | 12           |
| Stealing money or personal property belonging to other students, teachers, or staff | 38                                 | 46                               | 16           |
| Drinking alcoholic beverages at school                                              | 35                                 | 50                               | 15           |
| Theft of school property                                                            | 34                                 | 51                               | 15           |
| Carrying of knives, firearms, or other weapons at school                            | 29                                 | 55                               | 16           |
| Sexual activity at school                                                           | 24                                 | 57                               | 19           |
| Racial fights between whites, blacks, hispanics, or other minorities                | 22                                 | 64                               | 14           |
| Taking money or property by force, using weapons or threats                         | 18                                 | 66                               | 16           |
| Physical attacks on teachers or staff                                               | 15                                 | 71                               | 14           |

### The Goals of Education

The goals of education are difficult to separate from the goals of life. It is equally difficult to separate the responsibility of the schools for reaching these goals from that of other institutions in American life.

Nevertheless, this year's survey attempted to obtain some evidence of how the public rates the importance of many suggested goals. The ratings given to the goals listed reveal a pragmatic people who view education primarily as a means to economic success rather than to intellectual development. Near the bottom of the list is the goal of appreciation of the arts and letters, learning as a lifetime program, and participation in the democratic process.

The goals are listed below on the basis of the number of respondents who gave a "10" (the highest rating) to the goal in question.

The question:

I am going to read a list of possible goals of education. I would like you to rate the importance of each goal on a scale of zero to 10. A zero means a goal is not at all important and should not be part of the public school program. A 10 means a goal is the most important goal — before all others. A rating between zero and 10 means you consider the goal to be somewhere in between in importance.

|                                                                                                                                                    | Highest Rating    |                         |                         |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                    | National Totals % | No Children In School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
| To develop the ability to speak and write correctly                                                                                                | 68                | 65                      | 74                      | 71                         |
| To develop standards of what is "right" and "wrong"                                                                                                | 64                | 63                      | 68                      | 61                         |
| To develop an understanding about different kinds of jobs and careers, including their requirements and rewards                                    | 56                | 54                      | 60                      | 54                         |
| To develop skills needed to get jobs for those not planning to go to college                                                                       | 54                | 52                      | 59                      | 61                         |
| To develop the ability to use mathematics for everyday problems                                                                                    | 54                | 52                      | 56                      | 60                         |
| To encourage respect for law and order, for obeying the rules of society                                                                           | 52                | 52                      | 54                      | 53                         |
| To help students make realistic plans for what they will do after high school graduation                                                           | 52                | 50                      | 56                      | 43                         |
| To develop the ability to live in a complex and changing world                                                                                     | 51                | 50                      | 57                      | 42                         |
| To develop the desire to excel                                                                                                                     | 51                | 49                      | 56                      | 51                         |
| To develop the ability to think — creatively, objectively, analytically                                                                            | 51                | 49                      | 55                      | 58                         |
| To help develop good work habits, the ability to organize one's thoughts, the ability to concentrate                                               | 48                | 46                      | 52                      | 42                         |
| To prepare for college those who plan to attend college                                                                                            | 46                | 43                      | 53                      | 57                         |
| To develop the ability to deal with adult responsibilities and problems, i.e., sex, marriage, parenting, personal finances, alcohol and drug abuse | 46                | 44                      | 49                      | 43                         |
| To gain an understanding of science and technology                                                                                                 | 45                | 45                      | 50                      | 51                         |
| To help students get good/high-paying jobs                                                                                                         | 45                | 43                      | 51                      | 43                         |
| To help students overcome personal problems                                                                                                        | 45                | 42                      | 51                      | 45                         |
| To develop the ability to understand and use computers                                                                                             | 43                | 41                      | 47                      | 51                         |
| To develop the ability to get along with different kinds of people                                                                                 | 42                | 42                      | 43                      | 40                         |

|                                                                                                |    |    |    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| To gain knowledge about the world of today and yesterday (history, geography, civics)          | 42 | 40 | 46 | 39 |
| To encourage the desire to continue learning throughout one's life                             | 41 | 40 | 45 | 39 |
| To develop respect for and understanding of other races, religions, nations, and cultures      | 39 | 39 | 39 | 39 |
| To develop an appreciation for and participation in the arts, music, literature, theater, etc. | 35 | 33 | 39 | 37 |
| To develop an understanding of democracy and to promote participation in the political process | 33 | 32 | 35 | 32 |
| To develop an appreciation of the "good" things in life                                        | 32 | 33 | 32 | 24 |
| To promote physical development through sports programs                                        | 20 | 19 | 23 | 19 |

### Who Should Determine the Curriculum?

If the public were given the right to decide who should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools, the top choices would be the local school board and parents; the public would give the state government and the federal government relatively little say in this matter.

This view is in sharp contrast to the policies followed in most nations, where the national government typically sets the curriculum.

The question:

In your opinion, who should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools here — the federal government, the state government, the local school board, local public school teachers, or parents of public school children?

|                    | National Totals % | No Children In School % | Public School Parents % | Nonpublic School Parents % |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Local school board | 27                | 29                      | 25                      | 29                         |
| Parents            | 24                | 22                      | 30                      | 23                         |
| State government   | 17                | 18                      | 14                      | 16                         |
| Teachers           | 11                | 11                      | 11                      | 12                         |
| Federal government | 9                 | 9                       | 9                       | 4                          |
| Don't know         | 12                | 11                      | 11                      | 16                         |

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